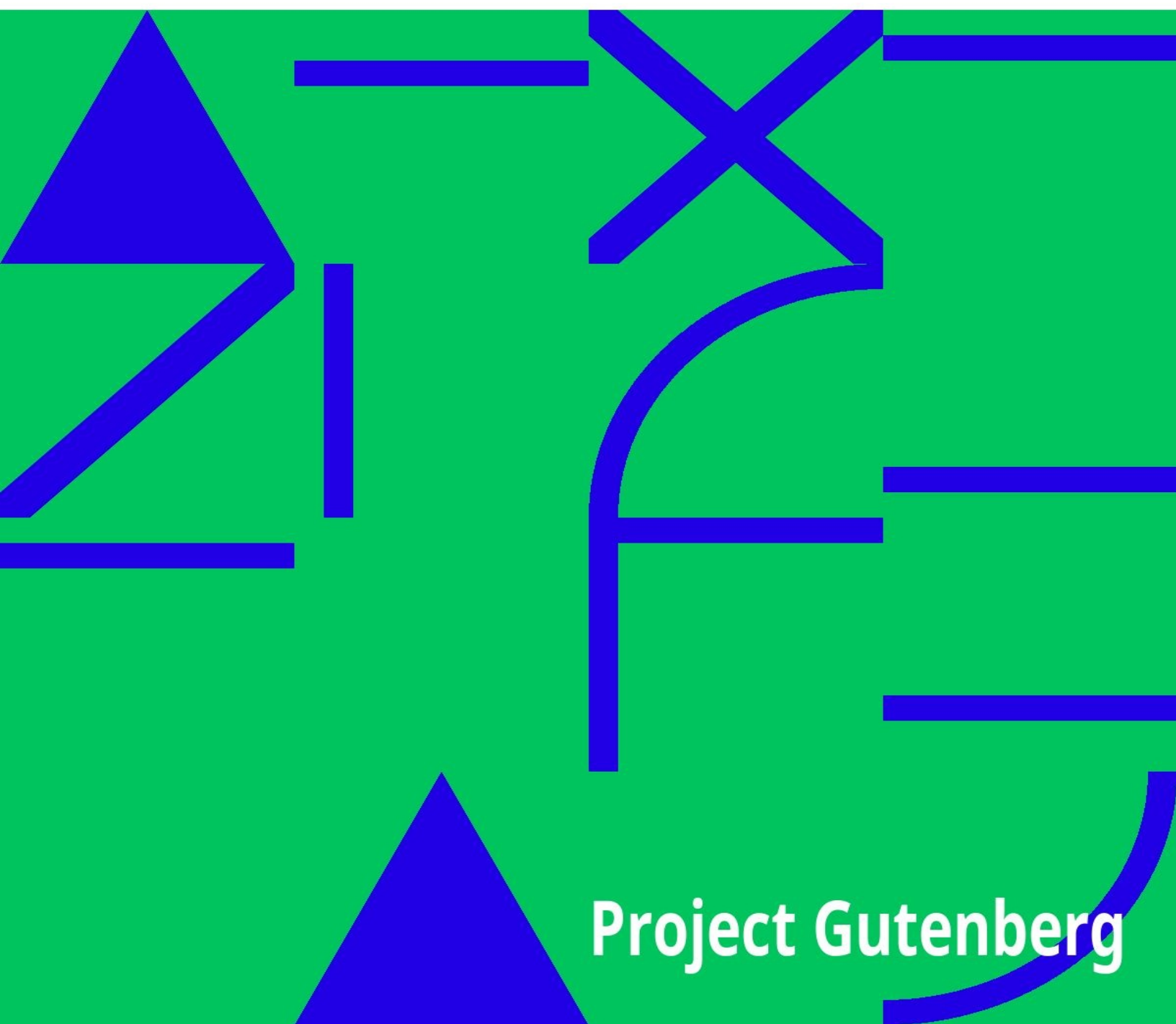


Adventure of a Kite

Harriet Myrtle



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The Table of Contents is not a part of the original book.

Illustration

Illustration

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The Rose-Bud Stories,
FOR YOUNG CHILDREN.

Illustrated.

Adventure of a Kite.

BY

MRS. HARRIET MYRTLE.

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SHELDON AND COMPANY.

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The Adventure of a Kite.

Drop Cap

ne evening, when Mary, her mamma, and Willie had all taken their seats near the window, and the story was about to begin, Mary reminded her mamma of a merry adventure that she had mentioned as having happened when she and her brother and Master White went out to fly their "new Kite."

"Do, mamma, tell us about that," said Mary.

Her mamma said she would, and after thinking for a few minutes, to recollect all about it, she began.

One fine, breezy morning in October, Master White came suddenly to our house, with his eyes looking so bright, and his cheeks so red from running in the fresh air, and quite out of breath besides.

"What is the matter, James?" we all cried out. "What a red face you've got!"

"Have I?" said he; "my nose is so cold! I ran here as fast as I could, there is such a beautiful breeze for a Kite. Come, both of you, and let us fly the Kite high up in the blue sky; come as many of you as can, and this day you shall see what a Kite can do!"

Up we all jumped, the Kite was brought down, and away we all started into the meadows, running nearly all the way, and James White never ceasing to talk of the wonderful things he intended the Kite should this day perform.

We arrived in a large, grassy meadow, sloping down to a low hedge. Beyond the hedge was a very large field, and beyond that field another large field, which had some high trees at the farthest end. In the tops of these trees was a rookery; we knew these trees very well, because we often used to walk that way, partly because it was a nice walk, and partly because an old woman, whom we were all very fond of, kept an apple and gingerbread-nut stall under the largest tree. However, as I said before, these trees were a long way off—two whole fields off—more, two whole fields and all the meadow. At the top of the meadow, near where we stood, there was also a high tree, and at the foot of this we laid down

the Kite.

"O, James," said my brother, "do you think we shall be able to make the Kite fly as high as the tree we are under?"

"As high!" said James White, "six times as high, at the very least."

He now carefully unfolded the tail from the body of the Kite, being very particular to undo all the tangles near the tassel, which made quite a bunch; but he brought it out perfectly. One end of the ball of twine was now attached to the body of the Kite. He then raised it up with the right hand, holding out the tail in three great festoons with the left, and in this way walked to and fro very uprightly and with a stately air, and turning his head in various quarters, to observe the direction of the wind. Suddenly he dropped the tail upon the ground, and lifting up the Kite with his right hand in the air, as high as he possibly could, off he ran down the meadow slope as fast as his legs could carry him, shouting all the way, "Up, up, up! rise, rise, rise! fly, Kite, in the air!" He finished by throwing the Kite up, continuing to run with the string in his hand, allowing it to slip through his fingers as the Kite rose. The breeze caught the Kite, and up it went in fine style. It continued to rise rapidly, and we ran to and fro underneath, shouting all the time, "O, well done, James White, and well done, Kite!"

By the excellent management of James, the Kite rose and rose, till we all said, "O, how high! how wonderful!" And then James White said he was satisfied.

Now you are all to recollect that this Kite was very large. In the story I told you in summer, where the making of this Kite was described, you remember that it was said to be as tall as James White himself, and of course very much broader. The consequence was, that this Kite was extremely strong. So we all sat down on the grass to hold the string, which James White said was necessary, as the Kite struggled and pulled so hard. It was now up quite as high as the string would allow it to go. But the wind seemed to be increasing, and James White said he began to be rather afraid that he must draw the Kite downwards, for fear it should have a quarrel with the wind up in the clouds, and then some accident might happen. We accordingly began to draw down the Kite slowly, winding the string upon the stick as it gradually descended. But notwithstanding all this care, an accident did happen after all.

Before the Kite was half-way down, a strong wind suddenly caught it sideways, and the Kite made a long sweep downwards, like a swallow, rising up again at some distance, swinging its tail about in a most alarming manner. "Bless my

heart!" said James White.

Up we all jumped from the grass. "Help me to hold her!" cried James White; "how she struggles!" Again came the wind, again the Kite made a sweep down and rose up again, as if indignant—then shook her tail and wings as if threatening to do some mischief—then made a quick motion to the right and a dance to the left—then made a very graceful courtesy deep down, as though she was very politely saluting the wind, but suddenly rose up with a sharp jerk, as though she had spitefully altered her mind—and the next moment made a dart first to the right and then to the left, and continued to do this till James White said he was sure something must happen.

We all held the string as fast as we could, and tried to pull down the Kite; but it was impossible, for instead of bringing her down, we were all three dragged along down the meadow slope, crying out, "Somebody come and help us! somebody come and help us!" But nobody else was near. In this manner the Kite was pulling us along, the string cutting our hands, and running through our fingers like fire, till at last I was obliged to let go, and being unable to get out of the way, was knocked down, and being also unable to roll myself out of the way, my brother fell over me. James White was thus left alone with the Kite, and was dragged struggling and hallooing down the meadow slope.

He was determined, however, not to let go; nothing could make him loose the string; he was determined not to be conquered; but before he had got to the bottom of the slope, the string of the Kite broke about half-way down, and up sprang the Kite again towards the sky, taking its course over the meadow towards the great field beyond. We all three followed of course, as fast as we could, staring up, and panting, and not knowing what to do. The Kite continued to fly in rather an irregular manner over the first great field. It then made a pitch downwards, and several tosses upwards, and flew straight over the second great field, in the direction of the high trees. "O, those trees!" cried James White, "it is flying towards the trees!"

He was right, the Kite did fly directly towards the trees, as James White said it would. Just as it arrived nearly over those trees, it made a great pitch downwards, right into the top of the largest tree, and completely knocked over one of the rooks' nests that was built there. We came running up as soon as we could, and then we saw that it was the very tree, at the foot of which was the stall of our dear old woman, who sold apples and gingerbread-nuts.

"Make haste!" cried she;—"the Kite is safe among the boughs; I can see its long tail hanging down. But do look here! the Kite has made us a present of five young rooks; two are fluttering among the golden pippins, and three are hopping and gaping among the gingerbread-nuts."

James White scarcely looked at the rooks; he said he had more important business to attend to. He took off his jacket, and immediately began to climb up the tree. In less than twenty minutes he succeeded in bringing down the Kite, with only two small rents in its left shoulder, and the loss of one wing, all of which he said he could easily repair.

We took the five young rooks home with us, and had great amusement in rearing and feeding them, and as soon as they were old enough, we took them out into their native fields, and let them fly directly under the tree where they were born.



An Autumn Flood.

Drop Cap

"I am going," said Mary's mamma, on another evening, to tell you a story about Scotland, and about some children who went there by sea, in a large steam-ship.

Their names were Charlotte, Helen, and Robert, and they went with their papa and mamma to visit their uncle and aunt. They went in August, when the weather is fine, and the days are long. They left home in the evening, for the steamer was to start at ten o'clock at night. There was a great bustle when they came to the place where the ships lie in the river Thames. Many people were getting their trunks and boxes in, and hurrying about. They liked to see all this bustle, and to see their own trunks and boxes put in. Then they stepped on board, across a wide, firm plank, and jumped for joy to find themselves really in the ship, and going to Scotland.

It was such a large steamer! They were surprised to see what a length it was. Then they went into a handsome cabin, called the saloon, beautifully lighted, with a great many people in it; and after being there a little while they grew very tired, and their mamma took them to the cabin where they were to sleep. When they saw their beds, they all began to laugh. They looked just like beds made on shelves, one above another. Two were on one side and two on the other, of a kind of closet. But they soon crept in, Charlotte and Helen one above another, and little Robert opposite. The fourth bed was for their nurse, who was going with them. They were all soon asleep. They never knew when the steamer began to go fast down the river towards the sea.

In the morning when they awoke, first one and then another heard a constant "thump, thump! bump, bump!" going on. This noise was made by the great engine that turned the paddle-wheels, and moved the ship on. And they felt the ship shaking, and trembling, and rocking, and then they were surprised to hear that they were already out of the river Thames, and had got into the salt sea. They were in a great hurry to be dressed, and when they ran up on the deck they saw the land on one side of them, and numbers of ships all round them, with their white sails shining in the sun, for it was a very fine morning. They tried to

count them, but it was very difficult; Charlotte counted a hundred, and Helen a hundred and ten. As to little Robert, he was too delighted to keep steady enough to count, and after trying once or twice, declared that there must be a thousand.

Very soon they were called to breakfast in the saloon, and sat by their papa and mamma very happily; but they ran away before they had finished, to see a town called Yarmouth, by which they passed so closely that they could see the houses, and bathing machines, and people. All the morning they had plenty to look at. They met other steamers, and fishing-boats, and ships, and saw different places on the coast. But before dinner-time they had lost sight of land, and saw nothing all round them but sea, and did not meet so many ships and boats. Their papa then took them to see the engine, and the great fires down in the engine-room, and made them look at the paddle-wheels, that go foaming round and round. Then came dinner-time, and they were very hungry; and afterwards they amused themselves with running about on the deck and reading story books. Soon after tea they went to bed and fell fast asleep.

Next morning they were glad to see the coast again. They were passing high cliffs and dark rocks, and they saw many sea-birds; gulls, with large flapping wings, that gave a strange, wild cry; and divers—pretty little creatures, that swam, riding along on the waves, and every now and then dipped down quite under, and then came up again at a little distance. On went the great steam-ship, and soon their papa told them that the land they now saw was Scotland.

Presently they came to some very fine rocks, higher than any they had seen, and then they passed some rocky islands. Now they began to see a great many large white birds flying about, stretching out their long necks, and their papa told them that these were called Solan geese, and that they had their nests on a great rock, standing out in the sea, called the Bass Rock. They soon came in sight of it, and when they passed near it they could see that its sides were all white with hundreds of these geese that were sitting there, and great numbers were flying in the air over it and round it. When they were able to leave off looking at all this, they saw on the top of the high cliff opposite to the Bass Rock a large ruined castle, called Tantallon Castle, which they thought very beautiful.

"Do you remember reading about the Black Douglas in 'Tales of a Grandfather'?" asked their papa.

"O, yes," said first one, and then another.

"Well, that was his castle," he replied.

Illustration

They looked at Tantallon Castle for a long time, as long as it was in sight. Charlotte said it was a great pity it was so ruined, and Robert wished he could see where the drawbridge used to be.

Now there began to be a great bustle in the ship, for they were getting near Edinburgh, where they were to land. At last Edinburgh was in sight. It is the capital city of Scotland, just as London is of England, and it is very beautiful. They saw it quite plain from the sea, with hills behind it and on each side of it, of many forms; some bare and rocky, others clothed with trees. When they came quite opposite to it, a gun was fired in the ship. It made such a noise that everybody started, and some of the ladies screamed. Charlotte and Helen did not like it; but Robert did very much indeed. Very soon afterwards they came up to a fine pier, stretching out into the sea, and there they all landed.

"So now they were in Scotland," said Willie.

They found their uncle's carriage waiting for them, and it took them to his house in the country, about fifteen miles off.

Well, at this place they were very happy. There was plenty of green grass to play about upon, and there were large, spreading trees, and sheep, and cows, and horses, and ponies; and there was a nice garden, with plenty of fruit and flowers. But what I am going to tell you most about is a little river that ran along just outside the garden wall; because this little river was the cause of a curious adventure, that happened in the month of September, after they had been several weeks in this pleasant place.

This river was narrow, and rather deep in some places; but in others it was broader, and very shallow. It was so shallow in dry weather that you could cross it without wetting your feet, by choosing some part where there were large stones standing up, and where there was not much water. But then you must go steadily. Charlotte could do it very easily; Helen generally stopped short, after she had placed her foot on the second stone, and turned back; but as to Robert, he jumped from stone to stone, and a day hardly ever passed that he did not go souse into the water, and get quite wet half up his legs. The proper way to cross was by a long plank, laid from one bank to the other, or by a little wooden bridge not far off.

You would hardly think that such a little gentle river as this could suddenly swell

into a foaming flood, and do all manner of mischief. But so it was.

This river rose, or began to flow, among a range of hills at some miles distance; and when you are older, you will understand how it is that rivers that rise among hills or mountains are apt to overflow when there is much rain. It happened one day, when all the family, except the children, had gone out on a visit, that it rained from morning till night, and when night came it still rained heavily. In the morning, when nurse went to dress the children, she told them to look out of the window. Their surprise was great to see the little stream, that they were used to step across, changed into a wide, rapid, foaming river. It made such a sound that they could hear it quite plain in their bed-room. It no longer looked clear and blue, but was thick, muddy, and of the color of red clay. They did not like to see it so; and what was worse it still rained, and the water rose more and more. The plank across it had been carried away in the night by the water, and had gone swimming down the stream. Before they had done breakfast, they heard that the wooden bridge was broken down; and now, when they looked out, they saw that the water had spread half over the meadow on the opposite side. The trees were standing in it, and looked as if they grew in a lake. The cows were all collected on a high bank, among some trees, and were lowing and appearing quite angry and offended at this strange conduct in the river. The sheep had gone as far as they could out to the very hedge, to keep on dry ground. The ponies had found a high part of the field, that had water all round it, so that it looked like a green island, and were feeding quite contentedly. Now and then they looked up, and shook their manes, as much as to say, "You can't get at us. It's of no use to want a ride."

At last it stopped raining, and the children were well wrapped up, and put on good thick shoes, and went out to look at all this nearer. On their way they met the gardener running down to try to save his stack of pea-sticks; but he was too late, it was already swimming away; all his fine stack, that he had piled up ready for spring; and he had had so many more important things to take care of that he had not had time to remove it sooner.

Many things now came floating down on the water. Young trees, branches, parts of railings and fences, broken bridges and planks, all went hurrying along, and the water foamed, and roared, and surged, and looked quite fearful.

While they all stood looking on, the gardener still lamenting over his pea-sticks, they saw something that looked like a large covered basket come floating along. It chanced that it passed very near the bank on which they stood, and little

Robert cried out, "Stop it!" and began to try to reach it with a long pole he had in his hands, with which he had been pretending to be a ship, and holding this up for the mast. He could not reach it; but the gardener took the pole, and after failing once or twice, managed to push and poke at the basket till he got it so near that the dairy-maid and nurse reached it with their hands, and pulled it to the bank. It was only covered with a few arched sticks, over which a white cloth was fastened.

They all crowded round it to see what it contained. They lifted up the white cloth. O, wonder and surprise! What did they see?

"What was it? *What* did they see?" cried Mary and Willie both at once.

They saw a pretty little baby fast asleep, and at its feet a cat coiled up comfortably.

"And was the baby not hurt, mamma?"

No, it was quite safe, and did not awake directly. Puss awoke and jumped out, and ran off before any one could stop her.

Illustration

The gardener said, that the basket, which they now saw to be a cradle, must have floated away from some cottage in the village just above. "Some poor woman is perhaps now in great grief about her child," said he.

"But we've got it safe," said Charlotte. "We'll take great care of it, and give it back to her. Let us take it into a warm room."

As she said this the baby opened its eyes and began to cry. Nurse lifted it up and tried to quiet it, and they all went in with it, the children kissing its poor little red arms, and saying all sorts of soothing things to it. When they got into the house, nurse asked for some warm whey with a little sugar in it. She said that was the best thing for such a little baby; and it sucked it in, and seemed to like it, and soon began to smile, and crow, and kick about its feet, and throw about its arms. The children were quite delighted at this; and now being happy about the baby they began to think of poor puss; and Robert and Helen went out to look for her. They found her just outside the house door, mewing and making a great fuss. Helen ran away and got a saucer full of milk, and put it down in the lobby. At this, puss began to walk slowly in, and then ran up to it and lapped it all up; and then she let Helen take her up, and carry her into the room where the baby was.

While they were all engaged in this way, they heard sounds of voices shouting and calling out near the river, and ran to the window to see what it was. They saw far out, on the other side of the water, near the edge of the meadow, five or six men and a woman, and the gardener was making signs and calling out to them.

"O!" said nurse, "you may be sure that is the poor mother of the baby."

"Let us run out and hold up the baby, to show her it is safe!" cried Charlotte. "Come quick! O, how happy she will be!"

Nurse wrapped up the baby in a warm shawl, and out they went. Helen carried the cat, and little Robert came bustling after them with the cradle, shouting as loud as he could, "They're all safe! here they are! look here!"

When the gardener saw them coming, he ran and caught up little Charlotte in his arms, and nurse gave her the baby, and she held it up as high as she could. The poor woman, who was indeed the mother, saw it directly, and seemed hardly able to bear so much joy, for her husband who was by her, threw his arm round her as if to prevent her falling down. She clasped her hands together—then held them out towards her child—then raised them upwards.

Mary and Willie could not sit still any longer, they both jumped up, and began to clap their hands and dance for joy.

"Did she come to the house to bring away her baby?" asked Mary.

Yes; she walked about two miles off, to a part of the river where there was a stone bridge; it was impossible to get across nearer, so she came in about an hour.

"But did she see that puss was there?" said Willie.

O, yes; I forgot to tell you that after she had a little recovered of the first joy of seeing her child safe, nurse held up Helen with puss in her arms, and Robert climbed up on the stump of a tree, and held up the cradle as high as he could.

"And then what did they do when the mother came?" said Mary.

She kissed her baby, and cried over it, and held it a long time in her arms; and her husband, who came also, told them that the flood had risen so suddenly that it had carried away part of the wall of their cottage, and swept away everything

they had, while he and his wife were trying to save their stack of wood; and that when they turned round, at the sound of the rushing water, they found that the cradle was gone; and then they forgot every thing else, and ran with several of their neighbors by the side of the river; but never hoped to find their child alive.

"But it *was* alive, and safe, and well," said Mary, "with these kind little girls and little Robert."

And when their uncle and aunt came home they were very kind to the father and mother. They had their cottage built up again and furnished, and gave them help in putting their garden in order, and there always continued to be kind feeling between them. As to the baby, it grew up to be a fine strong boy, and its parents named it Robert, in memory of the little boy who had helped to save it from the water.



The Little Milk-maid.

Drop Cap

here was once a little Milk-maid, who lived at a farm-house. Her name was Sally. On the summer mornings she used to be up and dressed at five o'clock. Then she took her bright milk-pail on her head, and her three-legged stool in her hand, and called her little dog Trusty, and tripped over the dewy grass to the stile that led to the field where the cows fed. The wild thyme gave out a sweet scent as she walked along; and the green leaves glistened in the sun, for the dew was still on them; and the lark flew up high, and his song came pouring down over her head. When she got to the stile, she saw all the four cows quite at the other side of the field. One was called Dapple, one Brindle, one Frisky, and one Maggie. They saw her get over the stile, but never stirred a step towards her. Dapple looked up for a moment, and then began eating again; Brindle did not seem to mind her; Maggie was lying down, and did not move; and Frisky lashed her tail and shook her head, and went on eating.

"O, this will never do!" said Sally. "Trusty, Trusty! go and bring me Dapple."

Dapple was brown all over, except a white face and tail. Trusty ran behind Dapple, and barked two or three times, just to tell her to move on. And she began to walk slowly and gravely towards Sally. Then Sally put down her little three-legged stool, and sat down by Dapple and milked her. When she had done, she gave her a pat, and said, "Now you may go." Then Dapple began to eat again.

"Now, Trusty," said Sally, "go and bring me Brindle." Brindle was all white. Trusty ran up to her, and she began to walk on; but when she had got to the middle of the field, she stopped to eat, and Trusty was obliged to bark pretty sharply, and tell her it was shameful of her. Then she went on and was milked.

Sally next sent Trusty to bring Frisky. She was brown and white, prettily spotted; but she was sometimes quite naughty when she was milked, and this time she seemed to mean to be so; for, as soon as Trusty got up to her, she set off and galloped up to Sally. Then, just as Sally began to milk her, she walked on, and left her and her stool behind, and very nearly knocked the pail over besides. So

Sally had to get up, and move stool and pail onwards, and then she said, "Stand still, Frisky," and stroked and patted her. So she stood still, and was very good.

"Now, Trusty, bring pretty Maggie," said Sally. Maggie was black and white, and very gentle and pretty. She came directly, and stood quite still, and was milked. Then they were all done.

Sally now lifted the pail, which was quite full, on her head, and carried it so firmly and steadily, that she had not to put her hand up to it, not even when she got over the stile, and in this way she walked along back to the farm.

Then she went into the cool, fresh dairy, and Trusty lay down at the door. The dairy had a stone shelf all round it, with shallow round pans ranged along it, all filled with sweet, rich milk, covered with thick, yellow cream. Here she took down her pail; and first she filled a large jug with the new milk for breakfast. She then poured all the rest into two or three pans, like the others on the shelf. Next, she took a flat wooden spoon, and skimmed the cream off several of the others, and poured it all into a square wooden machine, called a churn. It had a handle which turned round. She threw in some salt, and then began to turn the handle round and round, and it turned a wheel inside, and the wheel beat and splashed the cream round and round in the churn. Presently she looked in, and said, "It's not come yet." Then she turned the handle round again for some time. At last, when she looked in, there was a large lump of fine fresh butter, and all about it a thin white liquid, called butter-milk, and all the cream was gone. She took out the butter, and put it into a bowl of cold spring water, and made it up into three large rolls with two flat wooden knives. Next she cut off three or four slices, made them up into nice little rounds, and pressed them with a wooden stamp, with a rose-bud and leaves cut out upon it, and when she took it off, there were the rose-bud and leaves marked on the butter.

Then Sally poured all the butter-milk, and all the milk from which she had skimmed the cream, into a clean wooden pail, and stirred in some barley meal, and carried it off to the pig-sty. She stood outside the paling of the pigs' little yard, and called, "Pig—pig—pig!" and out came the pigs from their sty, little and big, grunting and squeaking and scrambling, and tumbling over one another. Then she poured all her pailful into the pigs' trough, and then they began squeaking and grunting and scrambling more than ever, and put their long noses in, some of them up to their eyes, and some got their feet in, and all of them gobbled it up as fast as they possibly could.

After Sally had fed the pigs, she took out some corn, and went to the poultry yard, and called, "Chuck—chuck—chuck!" and then the cocks and hens, and ducks and geese, came running round her, crowing and clucking, and quacking, and cackling, and the pigeons flew down and helped to eat, and all of them pecked up the corn, as fast as they could. In the afternoon they had boiled potatoes and sopped bread and vegetables, and curd, too, if Sally had been making whey.

When Sally had done all this, she went back into her room, and opened the bed curtains; and there was lying a little rosy-cheeked girl with light curly hair. And when Sally looked at her, she opened two large blue eyes, and held out her arms, and Sally kissed her, and said, "Are you ready to get up, little Annie?" And she said, "Yes." This was Sally's little sister, that her kind mistress let her have with her to love and take care of.

Then Sally took up little Annie, and got a large brown pan for her bath, and stood her in it, and brought a jug of fresh cold water to pour over her.

Little Annie stood very still, but when the water was coming, she held up her hands and said, "Will it be cold?"

"O, no!" said Sally; "it's a beautiful warm morning." Then she washed and dressed little Annie, and afterwards they had their breakfast together in a nice comfortable kitchen. Sally had a good appetite after having been so busy, and little Annie had a large basin of boiled bread and milk, and she always gave some to Trusty. This was the end of the little Milk-maid's morning work.

Illustration

THE ROSE-BUD STORIES.

GOING TO THE COTTAGE.

EGGS AND CHICKENS.

THE GOAT AND HER KID.

BERTHA AND THE BIRD.

THE DUCK HOUSE.

MAY DAY AT THE COTTAGE.

ADVENTURE OF A KITE.

A DAY IN THE WOODS.

THE PET LAMB.

TWO DEAR FRIENDS.

LITTLE AMY'S BIRTHDAY.

CHRISTMAS EVE AT THE COTTAGE.

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