

The Inglenook.

The Little Governess.

MARIANNE FARNINGHAM.

It was a good many years ago, when I was a child, that the little governess became ill. No one in the village was so greatly beloved as she, and the entire population mourned. The doctor was so besieged by questions about this particular patient that he almost lost his temper on several occasions.

"There are other people ill beside the little governess," he said, "pray allow me time to visit them."

"But our little governess is not an ordinary person, and we are so anxious about her," was the excuse.

"I know that! I am anxious, too," snapped the doctor.

It was obvious that he was. She who was loved by everybody was the doctor's favorite, too, and no one doubted that he would do all in his power to save her. He bled her and blistered her, poulticed and physicked her, and though, for a country doctor, he had a large practice, which extended for several miles, he visited her twice or three times every day. People prayed for her as for one of their own. The prayers for the sick were read for her in church, and special prayer meetings were held on her behalf at the chapel. Everyone longed to do something. Grapes from the Squire's viney were sent every day; the clergyman's wife made beef-tea, because she had a wonderful recipe which had been in her family for generations; the farmers sent cream in case it should be useful; and the cottage gardeners sent their most choice roses, hoping she might be able to look at them. But day after day passed, and the gloom on the doctor's face was not lightened, nor the anxiety of the village lessened.

I had my own personal reasons for being overshadowed with fear and sorrow. She was my governess, and I loved her; but on the very last afternoon she was in the school room I had been wickedly perverse and disobedient, and had actually headed a rebellion among several of the girls. I repented the next morning and hurried to school, making little speeches on my way expressive of my sorrow and shame, in which I hoped to beg her pardon before the other girls arrived. When I learnt that she was too ill to be present in school the world seemed to stand still, I knew her mother and called at her home to beseech her to let me see my governess. "It is very particular," I said. But the plea was in vain.

"She is too ill to see anybody, my child," said her mother, and she added, with tears in her eyes, "I am afraid you will never see her again."

When I told this to the other girls who had been naughty, they cried out, "It is not true. She cannot be going to die. Oh, God will not let her die!" I am sure that in all the after years of our lives none of us, whatever the stress and the sorrow of the time, prayed more earnestly than we prayed as children for the life of our little governess.

Scrap of news reached us from time to time, but they were all bad. The doctor was putting leeches to her head. All her beautiful hair had been cut off. Another doctor from London had been down to see her, "the cleverest physician in the world," but he gave no hope. Only our own doctor

did not quite despair, though he was at his wit's end.

At last even he lost hope. I heard him say so, for as usual, I was haunting the house, and I saw him go into the large sitting room and sit down by the table, burying his face in his hands.

"It is no use," he said, and his voice frightened me; it was so strange, and he sobbed as he spoke.

Almost without realising what I did I stole softly upstairs and into the room where my little governess lay. She looked like a small baby lying on the big-four post bedstead, and almost shut in by its heavy curtains and hangings. It was getting dark, and she did not seem to see me, so I hid behind one of them and watched her as well as I could.

Her mother came up and looked at her a moment, then went silently away again. It was awfully solemn and dreadful, and I was becoming too frightened to stay, when suddenly I heard a whisper.

"Polly."

I went to the bedside.

"Fetch me some water."

I turned to the table on which was a glass.

"No, no! I want a great drink of water—cold and clear—fresh from the well. Make haste—before they come back."

I hesitated, and her voice took a familiar tone of authority:—"Do as I tell you directly, bring it in a bucket and a jug."

I crept down and out into the yard at the back of the house. A bucket of water had just been drawn up from the well. Of course, I could not move the bucket, but near it was a can, which held about two quarts. On the window sill was a yellow mug, thick and common, such as in those days was used by farm laborers for their beer. I used it to fill the can, and then went softly upstairs.

I saw the eyes of the governess glisten with a strange light as she looked at the water. I lifted her head, and held the mug to her lips. How thirsty she must have been!—she drank it quite greedily, and whispered "More."

I gave her another mugful, and then another.

"Hide it away!" she said; and I pushed it under the valance on the dark side of the bed.

Then, kneeling beside her, I tried to make my confession.

"I'm so sorry I was naughty that afternoon—"

"Never mind, dear," she whispered; and she laid her little weak white hand on the thatch of dark curly hair which covered my head in those days. Gentle as was the touch it thrilled me in every nerve of my body.

"Run home now. Your mother will be anxious—"

I heard a step on the stairs, and slid away to the landing, and presently reached the door, and flew home like the wind.

From that hour she began to mend. A fortnight later I had the high privilege of taking the little governess for a walk of about twenty yards in the garden. I had been found out, and more than one person had said to me in severe tones, "It is a wonder you did not kill her."

I heard afterwards that she had been beg-

ging for water, but her friends were afraid to give it to her. They would have known better now.—The Christian World.

Miss Lady Starts to School.

BY ANNA DEMING GRAY.

"Miss Lady" was going to school! All the boys stood about, an interested group, watching Mother get her ready. Even Big Brother wasn't too big to have his own ideas as to which dress Miss Lady should wear upon this important occasion. And Big Brother was in the High School, too, and studied Latin.

"You must not whisper, and you musn't wiggle, and you must fold your hands just so," said Philip, who had been in school two years, and ought to know, if anybody.

"And you musn't tell that we call you 'Miss Lady,' they'd laugh," said Don.

"Course not," said Miss Lady, with contempt. "I called myself that when I was only two and a hash, and played 'come to see,' Don. Now I'm six. You start when you are six."

"There's one sure thing, you'll have to get over saying 'two and a hash,'" said Big Brother.

"Course," said Miss Lady with dignity. "Now I'm all weddy. Come on, Philip," and the crowd started.

"Poor baby!" said Big Brother, stooping to kiss her. "She has a lot to learn, hasn't she, Mother?" And he wondered why Mother smiled, for there were tears in her eyes.

She stood at the gate until they were all out of sight, and a verse she had read somewhere came to her mind.

I stood at the gate to watch her pass,
And she flung me a kiss—my little lass,
Tripping from freedom, to bondage and rule,
Alas—my wee girlie has started to school.

The row of dolls, sitting straight and open-eyed with their backs against the wall, in the corner by the machine, made her catch her breath with almost a sob, "I'm a very foolish woman," she said, trying to smile bravely, as she went resolutely to work.

But the hours were very long. It seemed to her, as she waited for the twelve o'clock whistle to blow, that there never had been so long a morning. At last there was a step on the stair. Not the tripping, skipping step Mother knew so well.

"Why, dear, it's only eleven o'clock," said Mother. "Did you get out so early?"

"Yes—um—No—um," said Miss Lady, looking out of the window and chewing one corner of her white apron.

Mother went on stitching and waited.

"I'm not a-going to school ever any more," said the little girl presently.

This startling announcement brought no response but the steady click, click of the machine.

"That Miss Dugan can't read as better as Philip! She reads, 'A—black—dog—runs.' Has to stop 'tween every word to spell the next word. She doesn't know much more than I do, Mother; tru'y she don't. And there's little wrinkles at the corner of her eyes! Most people know too much, Mother. That's why they act so smart when they grow up. I'm not ever a-going any more!"

"Gertrude Caroline," said Mother very gently, "where have you been, and what have you been doing this morning?"

"I have been to school," said the little girl standing with her hands behind her, and swinging from side to side. "And you have to put your toes to a chalk mark, and you have to bow over your head when they say the prayer, and it hurts your neck. And if