

mother. We must avoid the wicked as well as we can. It is our duty. On other occasions, we can say—'it is no affair of mine.' But to protect innocence is the duty of every good heart."

## CHAPTER II.

### TERESA'S MOTHER.

In the evening, when the old basket-woman had put up, in her store-room, whatever fruit she had not sold during the day, she went directly to Mrs. Mayfield, the girl's mother, and told her the whole story.

"I am sincerely obliged to you for your kindness," answered Mrs. Mayfield; "but I know something about that matter, and I will tell it to you. You shall know it all, but you must promise to keep it secret. Do you know old Mr. True?"

"Oh! certainly," she replied, "the whole town respects him as one of the best of men—a very rich and most virtuous citizen."

"Well, then," said Mrs. Mayfield, "here is the whole history. My husband, who was taken from me in the prime of his days, was in Mr. True's employment. Ever since his death, Mr. True has been exceedingly kind to me—especially during my last illness. Were it not for him, my orphan child would, long since, have wept over her poor mother's grave. After my recovery, my daughter, Teresa, resolved to do something to please our benefactor. She worked a black silk purse for him, embroidered with rose-leaves and rose-buds, and marked in pearls, with the words, 'God reward you.'"

"When Teresa brought him her humble little present, the good old gentleman was well pleased with it, and examined and praised the workmanship. 'Now,' said he, 'as he took out his old purse, I have no need of this. It is soiled and worn, but you will not refuse it as a present from me.'"

"Teresa did not wish to take the money. 'Take it—take it, at once,' said Mr. True; 'I know you will share it with your mother. She wants something to strengthen her after her illness, and she can earn nothing yet. Make no excuse now—take it at once.'"

"Whether she would or not, Teresa was obliged to take the rich present. When she came home, and poured out all the money on the table, both of us wept with joy. We had never been so rich since the death of my dear husband.

"'It is hard to be even with this good Mr. True,' said Teresa. 'We cannot make him our debtor, even for a day. But we must give him another pleasure on his birth day, which is just now at hand. However he must not know whence it comes, or we would certainly put him to more expense.'"

"Melons are his favourite fruit; and this year, they failed in his own garden. I searched all the gardens for a melon, but learned that the few melons of this season were not ripe. Late, yesterday, I went to the gardener that lives near the new gate, and he told me, that he had a beautiful melon, but was just after selling it to you. Teresa went in the morning to your stall, saw the melon, purchased it, and brought it home with the greatest delight.

"We placed around it, wreaths of oak leaves, the emblem of civic worth: and inscribed upon it in forget-me-not leaves, 'Blessings on beneficence.'"

"Teresa carried away the melon to place it secretly in Mr. True's summer-house, where he was accustomed to take his tea and smoke his pipe on fine mornings. As Mr. True had given us leave to supply our poor table with vegetables from his garden, there was nothing singular in Teresa's going there with her basket on her arm. So she succeeded in placing the melon, without being observed, on Mr. True's tea-table, where, as we afterwards found out for certain, he discovered it himself."

The fruit-woman was delighted with the whole history, which poor Mrs. Mayfield related with a heart bursting with gratitude. The woman went home. It was her heart's delight to have found a secret. But her secrets were never well kept. She was a good woman—but she could not hold her tongue—a failing that has done much harm in this world, and scarcely ever done any good.

## CHAPTER III.

### MR. TRUE.

As Mr. True was passing by the gate, one fine morning to take a walk in his garden, the basket-woman called out after him, "Mr. True, Mr. True, one little word with you."

Mr. True went over to her stall, and asked with an air of surprise, "What do you want, my good woman?"

"How did you like the melon?" she whispered. "Was it not excellent—very soft—full ripe—as yellow as a citron, and as red as a pomegranate? It was I sold it. Let me tell you the whole story."

"What melon do you mean?" said Mr. True, pretending to know nothing of the melon.

"Oh!" said the woman, "the one you got the other day with the oak-leaves and forget-me-nots. Was it not excellent?"

"Indeed it was delicious," says Mr. True. "I had it served up to a large company of my friends. But tell me who bought it, and sent it to me?"

"Oh! that's a secret I cannot tell for the whole