

OUR DEAR BARBARA.

(From Home Heroes)

(Continued.)

Jane removed the old shoe and stocking, and exhibited a foot in even a worse condition.

"How do they feel?" asked the lady. "Oh, ma'am, they burn and hurt me dreadfully," replied the girl.

"Draw me a bucket of cold water, Jane." "Yes, ma'am." And Jane turned away quickly.

"Oh dear!" said the child, in distress. "Please give me my shoes and stockings. All the people are waiting for breakfast. I'll never get round."

"Put just enough warm water in to take off the chill."

Mrs. Grayson spoke to Jane, not heeding Barbara.

"Will that do?" "No. It is too warm. I want it tepid heat."

"Do let me go!" urged Barbara. "The people will be angry."

"There; put your feet in," said Mrs. Grayson, as Jane set the bucket on the floor in front of the child.

"Mrs. Miller'll beat me." And tears ran over Barbara's face.

"No, Barbie," said Mrs. Grayson, kindly, "Mrs. Miller shall not beat you. I will see to that."

"But you don't know her, ma'am, as I do."

"I'll tell you what I do know, Barbie," said Mrs. Grayson, as she knelt by the singular-looking child who drew so strongly upon her sympathies, and held her feet in the water: "I know that Mrs. Miller will never hurt a hair of your head."

"But what will people do for their milk this morning?" Barbara was as much troubled on this head as on that which involved consequences to herself.

"Do without it!" was the firm reply. "You are not going from this house to-day."

"Oh dear, ma'am! I must go round with my milk."

In vain did Barbara plead for freedom to go forward in the way of duty. She was under the control of those who were stronger than she, and quite resolute. After keeping the child's feet in water for ten minutes, or until they had ceased to ache and burn, Mrs. Grayson dried them with a soft napkin until all moisture was removed.

"Now stand up, Barbie."

But, in attempting to bear her weight, Barbara cried out with sudden pain, while the blood started from many gaping sores on her feet.

"You see, Barbie," said Mrs. Grayson, kindly, "that there is to be no more serving of milk to-day. Jane," she added, "you take her up to the little room next to yours. There is a bed in it, you know."

The cook's heart was in all this work of mercy. So she lifted Barbara in her strong arms and carried her upstairs, followed by Mrs. Grayson.

"I think she has fever," said Jane, as she placed her on the bed. "Just feel how hot her hand is!"

"Yes; I noticed that," replied Mrs. Grayson. "The child has considerable fever. In fact, she's ill enough to be in bed, instead of on the street carrying milk-pails; and in bed we must place her. So, do you take off her clothes while I go for one of Helen's wrappers."

"Indeed, ma'am," objected Barbara to this, "I can't lie here, Mrs. Miller will be so angry; and what will the people do for their milk?" This was the question that troubled the poor child most of all.

"Do without it!" answered Jane, who was getting provoked at Barbara's great concern for her customers.

"They expect me, and I've never disappointed them. Everybody's breakfast will be waiting," replied Barbara.

"Not everybody's," replied Mrs. Grayson, smiling. "But don't trouble. What can't be cured must be endured."

"I wish Mrs. Miller knew about it," said Barbara, still pursuing the theme.

"Where does she live?" Barbara gave the direction. It was not far away.

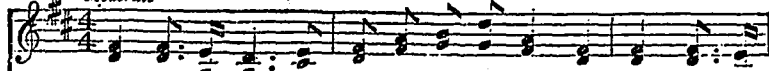
"I'll send her word to come and get her milk-pails."

This satisfied the child, who, now that the strain was gone, was showing more and more exhaustion. Jane removed her scanty garments, and laid her under the bed-clothes.

"I do believe I am sick," said Barbara,

Hark, Hark! my Soul!

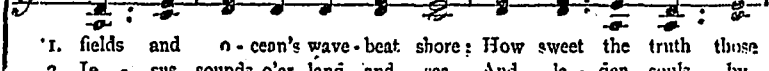
"Are they not all ministering spirits?"—HEBREWS i. 14.
F. W. FABER. By permission. Arr. by C. C. CONVERSE and I. D. SANKRY.
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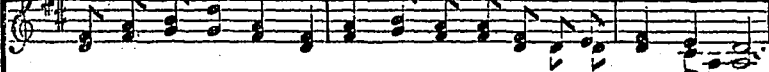
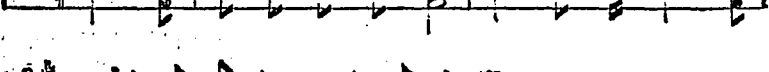
1. Hark, hark! my soul! an-gel-ic songs are swell-ing O'er earth's green
2. Far, far a-way, like bells at ev-ning peal-ing, The voice of
3. On-ward we go, for still we hear them sing-ing, "Come, wea-ry



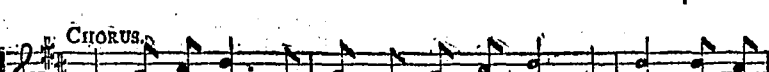
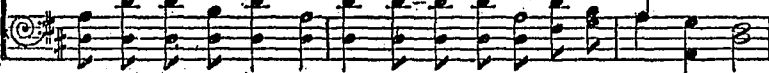
1. fields and o-cean's wave-beat shore; How sweet the truth those
2. Je-sus sounds o'er land and sea, And la-den souls by
3. souls, for Je-sus bids you come; "And thro' the dark, its



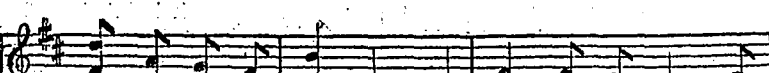
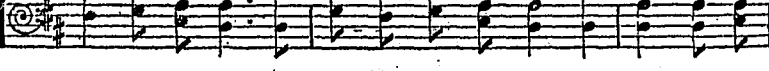
1. bles-sed strains are fell-ing Of that new life when sin shall be no more.
2. thousands meek-ly steal-ing, Kind Shepherd, turn their wea-ry steps to Thee.
3. ech-oes sweet-ly ring-ing, The mu-sic of the Gos-pel leads us home.



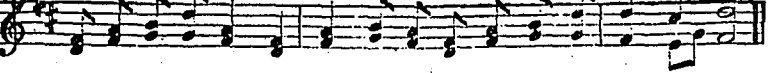
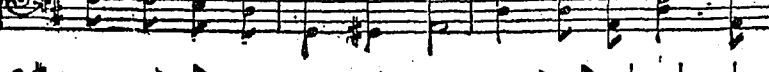
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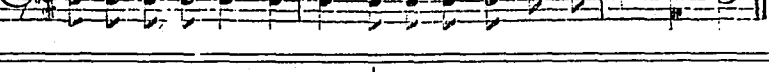
CHORUS
An-gels, sing on! your faith-ful watch-es keep-ing; Sing us sweet



frag-ments of the songs a-bove, Till morn-ing's joy shall



end the night of weep-ing, And life's long sha-dows break in cloud-less love.



in her artless way, lifting her eyes languidly and looking at Mrs. Grayson. "What a kind lady you are! God will bless you for being good to poor little Barbie."

Her voice, which was singularly soft and sweet, died faintly away, and her lids fell heavily over her eyes. Mrs. Grayson, who was touched with pity for the strange child, and who felt her interest increasing every moment, laid her hand upon her forehead. It was burning with fever.

Two weeks passed before Barbara was able to sit up. During the first week she was delirious for nearly three days; and the physician said that her life was in danger. In the beginning he feared that she had an infectious fever; and there was some anxiety on the part of Mrs. Grayson for her children. But this apprehension soon gave way; and then her two little ones—Jennie and Katie—made their way to Barbara's chamber. At first her face repelled them; but, when she spoke, the charm of her voice drew them toward her like magnetism.

The love of children was a living thing in the heart of Barbara; and she was delighted to have Jennie and Katie in her room. As soon as she was able to sit up, she amused them by various little arts and devices which she had learned, and read to them out of the books they brought to her. In the beginning of this intercourse Mrs. Grayson watched Barbara very closely, and questioned the children minutely as to what she said to them. She was soon satisfied that all was right—that although

she had lived amidst temptation and exposure to vice, she was untainted by the atmosphere she had been compelled to breathe.

"Barbie," said the lady to her one day, after she was able to sit up in a chair for several hours at a time, "how would you like to live with me?"

A flash of light went over the little girl's face, and she looked at Mrs. Grayson in an eager, hopeful, bewildered manner, as if she half thought herself dreaming.

"I'm in earnest, Barbie. Would you like to live with me?"

"What could I do, ma'am?"

"My nurse is going away. Could you not take her place?"

"I love Jennie and Katie and the baby, ma'am."

"That's one qualification," said the lady. "And I'm strong when I'm well, ma'am."

Mrs. Grayson thought of the two great milk-pails, and was satisfied on that head.

"And I'll do just what you tell me to do, ma'am."

"Very well, Barbie, I think we may settle it that you are to be my nurse. If you love the children, and are strong, and do just what I tell you, I can ask no more."

"But," said Barbara, a troubled look coming into her face, "maybe Mrs. Miller won't give me up, ma'am."

"Why not?"

"She says I'm bound to her. A lady asked me once if I wouldn't come to her house and live. When I told Mrs. Miller, she got dreadful angry."

"Did you ever go anywhere with her and put your name or mark on a paper!"

"No, ma'am."

"Then I think that you're not bound to her."

"Oh yes, I am, ma'am. She made me promise on the Bible, a good while ago, that I'd live with her for five years. And it isn't two years yet. I didn't want to do it, but she made me."

"Why did she exact this promise, Barbie?"

"I don't know, ma'am, unless it was because I was always a-working and a-doing."

"And you think yourself bound by that promise?"

"Yes, ma'am. If Mrs. Miller won't give me up, I must go back to her. I promised on the Bible, you know."

"And to keep your promise you are willing to take up your old hard work again of feeding and milking cows, and serving milk, instead of coming into this nice house to nurse children whom you love?"

"Yes, ma'am, if Mrs. Miller won't give me up," replied Barbara, firmly. "I promised on the Bible that I'd live with her five years, and I've only been there two years."

"But, if I understand it, Barbie, Mrs. Miller forced you to make that promise."

"She said she'd beat me if I didn't do it."

"Then she compelled you."

"But, ma'am, you see I needn't have promised for all her threats. I could have stood the beating and held my tongue, if she'd killed me. That's how it was. So, as I've promised, I'm bound."

Struck with the child's mode of looking at the question, and still more interested in her, Mrs. Grayson determined to let matters take their course between Barbara and Mrs. Miller, in order to test the character of this singular child.

"I must send for Mrs. Miller," she said, "and have a talk with her. Perhaps I can induce her to give you up."

Barbara was not sanguine; and Mrs. Grayson noticed that her face wore a troubled look.

Mrs. Miller, who had already called several times to ask about Barbara, but who had not been permitted to see her, was now sent for. The child shrank back and looked half frightened as the hard, coarse, determined-looking woman entered the room in company with Mrs. Grayson, and fixed upon her a pair of cruel eyes. Something like a smile relaxed her withered face as she spoke to Barbara.

"I have sent for you," said Mrs. Grayson, "in order to have a talk about Barbie."

Mrs. Miller nodded.

"Is she bound to you?"

"Yes, ma'am." Promptly and firmly answered.

"Would you like to give her up, if I'd take her?"

"No," Mrs. Miller uttered the little word resolutely.

"In what way is she bound?" queried Mrs. Grayson.

"She's bound all right, ma'am—fast and sure," replied Mrs. Miller, showing some impatience.

"And you can't be induced to part with her?"

"No, ma'am."

"Not for her good? I would like her for a nurse; and that will be so much easier for her, you know."

"She's my girl, Mrs. Grayson," replied the woman to this; "and I don't think it just right for you to be trying to get her away from me. What's mine is mine."

"I'm sorry," said Mrs. Grayson; "and particularly on Barbie's account. But if you won't give her up, why—"

She paused and looked at Barbara. There was an expression of despair upon the child's face that touched her deeply.

"Why, I won't!" Mrs. Miller finished the sentence. "And now, ma'am," she added, "Barbie has been a trouble to you long enough, and had better come away."

"She is not well enough to be moved for two or three days yet," said Mrs. Grayson.

"I don't know that," replied Mrs. Miller.

"She's strong. I reckon she can walk with a little help. Come, Barbie."

(To be Continued.)

Do YOU THINK of one falsity as harmless, and another as slight, and another as unintended? Cast them all aside; they may be slight and accidental, but they are ugly soot from the smoke of the pit for all that.—*Ruskin.*