

tables, which were like old soldiers wounded and bruised by long service in warfare, but solid and upright and gallant in spite of all they had suffered. Naturally this had been Dolly's ideal of every English nursery, and the bright, light room, with its new toys and furniture, had been a distinct shock to her. She had supposed that they were coming to her father's nursery of former years, and had expected to see traces of his childhood in many a torn, ancient book and broken toy. But she tried not to feel disappointed, and to learn to like the new home.

Duke arose in capital spirits, and it was a relief to Dolly that they were to breakfast alone with Lucy in the nursery, and not with their grandmother, as she had feared.

And after breakfast Lucy gave them leave to go downstairs to play in the hall, if they would be quiet over it, and told them they might go into any of the lower rooms that they liked and look round at the things there. Dolly's quiet ways and gentle manners inspired confidence, and she promised to keep Duke out of mischief.

Lady Temple never left her own private apartments before eleven o'clock, so there was no danger of her hearing the children, or being disturbed by their footsteps or voices.

Perhaps had she been consulted, the little ones might not have gained such ready permission to range over the house; but good-natured Lucy was anxious to make them happy, and Parker was always closeted with her mistress during the early hours of the morning, so there would be no one to order them back to the nursery, or reprimand them for trespassing into forbidden regions.

It was a happy idea, so far as the children themselves were concerned, for they were full of curiosity about their new home, and they found so much to admire, and everything was so strange and new, that the hours which had seemed long the previous evening now slipped away they hardly knew how.

At eleven o'clock Lucy came and dressed the children for walking, and took them out for an hour. They did not go into the pretty gardens, as Dolly had hoped, but walked along the roads. These were pretty too, in their way, and the hedges looked very green, and the grass very long and soft, to eyes used to the parched and arid plains of India.

"It is pretty in England," said Dolly from time to time, and when she saw anything unusually attractive, such as a bit of hawthorn bursting into flower, she would say earnestly—"O Duke, don't you wish mamma could see it too?"

Duke was quite restored to amiability to-day, and chattered away at the top of his voice. Lucy and he did nearly all the talking, and Dolly walked beside them, sometimes listening and sometimes thinking her own thoughts.

When they returned home, Lucy took them, at their earnest request, a walk round the garden. It was, as they had seen from the first, much too stiff and trim and orderly to be attractive to children. Dolly felt sure she could never play there happily. The windows of the house seemed like rows of solemn eyes all fixed upon her; and she could not rid herself of the notion that her grandmother would always be watching them with those stern, keen eyes of hers, which looked as though they never smiled.

But she forgot all about the dreaded grandmother when they walked round to the back of the house and came upon a piece of water, which was a large lake, very clear and sparkling, and extended for a considerable distance on each side beyond the limits of the garden. The gardens on the other side looking most inviting, with their wide-spreading trees, comfortable seats, and stretches of green grass,

yellow with buttercups. Duke gave a shout of delight and made a rush at the little bridge which spanned the water, but he found that the gate was locked.

"Open it!" he cried to Lucy. "Open it! I want to get across."

"I can't, Master Marmaduke, I haven't got the key. But you ask your grandmother, and I daresay she will give you and Miss Dorothy leave to play there sometimes. It is very select. Nobody can come in except people from those great houses you see over there, behind the trees, and my lady knows all the families."

"I shall tell grandmother we wish to play there," remarked Duke.

"It would be very nice," added Dolly, looking with longing eyes across at the shady walks. "It looks so cool there."

"Yes, and the sun is quite hot to-day," said Lucy. "We had better come in now. You look pale, Miss Dorothy; does your head ache?"

"A little: it is hot out here. I should like to go in."

"You are to have your dinner downstairs with my lady's lunch," Lucy announced as she led the children upstairs. "I must put you tidy for it—my lady can't bear being kept a single minute. Mind you behave pretty to her, Master Marmaduke. You won't get anything out of her if you don't."

"I always get what I want," returned Duke, with the confidence of a petted child. "Nobody ever says 'no' except mamma, and she didn't often."

"Because you were good with her," suggested Dolly gently. "She would not have let you speak to her as you speak to grandmother."

"I shouldn't want to," cried Duke. "I love mamma, and I don't love grandmother one bit."

"O fie, Master Marmaduke!"

"Well, I don't, and I shan't either, if she isn't nice to us. I don't believe Dolly does either; do you, Dolly?"

"I shall try to love her very much if I can," answered the little girl quietly. "But there has not been time to learn how, yet."

Grandmother was not an easy person to learn to love, poor little Dolly was more and more convinced of this. She received the children in the same stiff way as she had done the previous afternoon, bestowing a formal kiss upon each, to which Duke submitted this time, though with reluctance, remembering Lucy's warning; and in answer to Dolly's inquiry, she answered just in the same precise way—

"Very well, I thank you, Dorothy."

Coldness from any one she wished to love, seemed to freeze up Dolly's spirit within her, and made the warm little heart feel chill and sorrowful; but Duke was less sensitive. He did not care at all about his grandmother, and only thought of her as a kind of ogre, not to be feared, but to be in a manner propitiated, in order that he might get his own way.

"Grandmother," he began, as soon as they had sat down to table, "I like your garden, but it's a very hot one. You don't have any trees in it."

"No, Marmaduke; there are not many trees."

"In India they never let me walk in the sun. They said it would hurt me."

"Our sun is not like what it is in India."

"It is very hot all the same. I don't think it's good for me."

Duke spoke with preternatural sedateness, and Lady Temple listened with something almost like a smile hovering over her face.

"Well, Marmaduke, I suppose something is coming. What is it you want?"

"I want you to give Lucy the key of the bridge, and let us go into the pretty, shady

gardens opposite. They look so nice and cool. Dolly and I would like to play there. Will you let us?"

"And what beside?"

"If you please," added Duke, catching Dolly's eye and the movement of her lips.

"I have no objection to that," said Lady Temple quietly. "I will give orders that Lucy shall take you there when it is too hot for walking in the sun."

"Thank you, grandmother," said Dolly gratefully.

"Thank you," said Duke in his more off-hand fashion; and after a little consideration he added, "I want to go there this afternoon."

"This afternoon I was thinking of taking you a drive. I want to take you to the house of an old friend of your father's. Which will you do, Marmaduke, go with me, or play in the gardens?"

"Play in the gardens," was the prompt reply, and Lady Temple, though she looked a little more severe, merely said—

"Very well, Marmaduke. I never make people drive with me, if they will not when I ask them."

Duke did not look the least abashed. He was in great spirits at the permission granted him. Dolly wondered that grandmother had given him his choice in the matter, and thought she must be very clever if she had already found out that Duke would, in all probability, be very disagreeable, and produce anything but a favourable impression, if taken against his will to pay a call.

"Dorothy," said Lady Temple, "will you come with me?"

"No, grandmother, she can't," objected Duke, "I want her."

"So do I," returned the old lady quietly. "Dorothy, would you rather stay with Marmaduke or go with me?"

"Of course she'd like to stay with me," cried Duke eagerly. "Stay with me; do, Dolly! Don't go with her!"

Poor Dolly was sorely tempted, she dreaded inexpressibly a long drive with her grandmother; but she knew what her mother would have wished her to do under the circumstances, and she did not hesitate long.

"I will go with you, grandmother."

"Very well, Dorothy, I have ordered the carriage for three o'clock."

"O Dolly!" protested Duke, half compassionate, half indignant. "How stupid you are! you know you will hate driving with her."

"O Duke, hush?" Poor Dolly looked half scared, but Lady Temple took no notice of what the children said to one another.

"I believe you will," persisted Duke, impervious to her supplicating looks; "and you would like being in the gardens."

"I can go another day," answered the little girl in a low voice. "And I shall like to see people who were papa's friends."

"You hate to see strangers," returned Duke in rather a sullen way.

"I'm getting braver now," answered Dolly with a smile. "It is silly to be frightened."

"I'm never frightened," asserted Duke manfully; "not of nobody."

And the grandmother's eye rested upon his bold, unconscious face with a glance of proud approval, although she spoke no word, and did not appear to hear what passed.

Parker dressed Dolly with great care for the drive, and gave her many instructions how to sit and how to speak, saying that my lady was wondrously particular about manners, and very hard to please.

"When I go out, Parker," said Dolly quietly, "I try just to do what I think mamma would like, and then I know it will be right. Mamma says the people who have the best manners are those who think little about themselves