

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

THE LITTLE BROTHER A CHILD'S TALE.

(Translated from the German.)

BY ELLA WITHROW STAFFORD.



ONE lovely May morning little Emilie went for a walk, to take her baby brother to her grandfather's farm, just outside the village. The little brother was not very well, indeed through the whole long winter he had not been strong. The sun shone so beautifully, the grasses waved in the wind, and the daisies were beginning to blossom—yes, surely spring was here.

How pleasant it was at the old farm-house! There stood the old barn, with the cowstables

under it, and the gay weather-cock on the roof, and there on the other side was the poultry house and all the hens, ducks and geese! Here they come, cackling and gabbling, each with an air of great importance. And there stands Liese, the great brown cow, Emilie's own cow, which her grandfather gave her. And, oh! see Carlo, see how he wags his tail, as if he would laugh because Emilie is come again. She was at grandfather's a year ago, but now she has a baby brother with her. But the dear little fellow has grown tired; see how his little eyes wink, and then again he sleeps, and dreams of angels, and smiles so sweetly. There is a lovely spot between the flowering elderberry bushes, that is usually grandmother's favourite seat in the summer time. Emilie sits down upon the wide bench; she is tired too, she has carried her little brother such a long way. She takes the hay-fork and makes a bed of hay, and lays him on it and seats herself beside him. She looks up at the bright sky above, then she looks at the brown Liese; what is she thinking about? Ah! here comes a sheep through the door with its little lamb. Then Emilie leans her head against the wall, and softly sings—

"What will you give,
What will you give
For my little brother fair?
Nothing is bright as his lovely blue eyes,
Or soft as his curly hair.

"What will you bring,
What will you bring
To trade for my treasure here?
No one can show me a thing so sweet,
Anywhere far or near."

"What will you give for little brother?" The brown Liese looks at little Emilie out of her great, soft eyes, and says, "Dost thou really think so much of thy baby-brother there? Can he run and jump and play yet?"

"Oh! no," says Emilie, "he cannot walk yet."

"So?" How old is he, then?"

"Eleven months."
"Eleven months! My baby could run before it was two days old! I do not wish thy baby." And the brown Liese blinks disdainfully.

"M-a-a! m-a-a!" says the old sheep coming through the door, and the wee lammie by its side cries out too, "M-a-a! m-a-a!" "Let me too see the little brother thou would'st sell! Hum! He pleases me, but he has only two legs!"

"Yes," says Emilie, "that is all."

"Then my baby is worth twice as much as thine, for mine has four legs. And it seems to me thy baby has no wool."

"Oh! but see his beautiful golden curls."

"It is too thin, too thin," says the sheep, shaking its head, "I think I shall not exchange with thee." And away goes the old sheep, and the little white lamb kicks his heels in the air and follows his mother out.

"Gluck, gluck!" comes the hen, picking up seeds on the ground—a clucking hen with twelve chickens. "Gluck! gluck!" she calls, and shows them a grain of corn in the grass, or a little beetle on the ground.

"Well, and how art thou, Nellie?" says the hen, passing by; "art thou here again?" Listen, dost thou want to sell thy little brother? What can he do, then? Can he find worms and eat them?"

"What!" says Emilie, offended, "eat worms? He eats soup and drinks milk!"

"Oh! indeed," says Mrs. Hen, angry too, "and he has no yellow feet, and I fear he has no feathers." And off she goes with all her brood, and does not look again at the little boy.

"Purr! purr!" comes from the corner under the hay, and Emilie wonders what can it be, till she sees the old gray Minzie who has made a little bed there for her kittens.

Emilie calls the cat and the little purr-kittens to her.

"Thou art very proud," says Minzie, looking at the hen, "What need of that? Twelve chicks! That is frightful! Who will find food for them all? I think three or four children are enough. Dost thou not think so too, Emilie?"

"One is enough," answered the child, "when he is sick and teething."

"What is that! My kittens have no trouble with their teeth, I am sure. Do not be angry, but I think I shall not take thy little brother, because I fancy he will hardly be able to catch mice. If thou wish—for old friendship's sake—I will let thee have one of my pets to play with for a while. That will comfort thee perhaps, because thy wee brother is of so little use."

"No," said Emilie, "I would rather have my little brother than anything in the world."

At that moment there streamed in a sunbeam from behind a cloud and played on baby-brother's sweet little face, and the dear little fellow laughed in his sleep.



and her young lamb by her side, and the old hen was strutting to and fro in the yard so proudly, she had forgotten the little dreamer. But the sunbeam was there yet, on the face of the sleeping baby, lighting up and warming his face with the glow of returning health. With thoughtful eyes Emilie looked on the dreaming form of the wee lammie, and then she softly hummed the rest of her little song.

"Nothing will do, nothing will do,
You may travel the world around;
But never on earth, or sea, or air,
Will a brother like him be found."

SAY not caustic things, but ordinarily let your conversation be instructive, abounding with anecdotes neatly told. Maintain an affectionate regard for others, which will cause them to show the like to you. Let kindness and grace make up your style. Your presence will be welcomed by all.



And out of the sunbeam—Emilie saw it distinctly—glided so soft and slowly a beautiful angel from heaven. He was so quiet and gentle, his wings hardly rustled at all. He stood before the sleeping baby-boy and bent over him, the locks of his hair falling on the pure forehead of the child, and his lips lightly touched his sweet mouth.

"Wilt thou give him to me," said the angel, lingering and looking long into Emilie's eyes.

"What wilt thou do with little brother?" anxiously answered Emilie.

"I will bring him to God, so he will become well again and happy."

Emilie gazed pleadingly into the angel's mild, kind face, her lips quivered and her little heart beat faster, and at last she said brokenly, "If thou wilt bring brother to God in heaven, take him with thee!" She could say no more, but burst into sobs, and two great tears rolled down her cheeks. Then the angel bent over her and laid his hand in blessing on her head and on her little brother's, and softly breathed,

"Be better, little brother; be happy, Emilie; the Lord give you always a pure and unselfish heart. Some day I will come to take you both to heaven."

But what has happened to Emilie? Has she then really been sleeping and dreaming all this time? She rubbed her eyes. There stood the old brown Liese, as if she had not stirred. And there was the old sheep