

ed the twisted note Stuart had given her. It enveloped a ring, and contained the following in pencil—'Dear Lizzy, I have been walking before your window for the last hour watching your kind preparations for those who are every day blest with the brightest and softest of all lights—the light of your countenance. Your very happy face has made me sad; for my selfish thoughts tell me this happiness is quite independent of me. Shame, shame to me! There is my Lizzy, I have said, giving gifts and receiving them, making others happy, and made happy herself, and bestowing no thoughts on me! I have wrapped up this little ring, on which is enamelled a forget-me-not, and bade it speak to your heart the cravings of mine.

'FORGET ME NOT, dear Lizzy! The ring is indeed too true an emblem of the endless circle of my sorrows. No beam of light is there in the parting,—none in the dawning year for me!'

Lizzy read and re-read the note—very like all lover's notes—but as she thought, peculiar and most peculiarly heart-breaking. The ring she put on her finger, and went to bed holding it in the palm of her other hand, and before morning she had dreamed out a very pretty romance with a right pleasant and fitting conclusion. The morning came, New Year's morning, with its early greeting, its pleasant bustle, its noisy joys, and to Lizzy its cares; for there is no play-day in the calendar of an American mistress of a family, be she old or young. Lizzy, 'the genius loci' was the dispenser general of the bounties of the season. The children waked her at dawn with their kisses and cries of 'Happy New Year, sister;' the servants besieged the door with their earnest taps and their heart-felt good wishes, and each received a gift and a kind word to grace it.

After breakfast the library door was opened and the promise revealed to the little expectants. Then what exclamations of surprise! What bursts of joy, and what a rush as each sprang forward to pluck his own fruit from the laden tree! Each, we said, but little Ella, youngling of the flock, clung to Lizzy, and leading her to the extremity of the room uncovered a basket, containing various souvenirs, saying, 'papa said we might all div something to the one we loved best, and so we div'd this to you, sister.'

And now in the happy group around the tree was apparent the blossoming of that fruit which the sister had planted and matured in their heart. 'Thank you, sister, said Julius, taking from his branch a nice book, filled with copies for him to draw after—how much pains you must have taken to do this for me! how much time and trouble you have spent upon it—I hope I shall never feel tired of doing any thing for you.'

'O, sister Lizzy,' exclaimed little Sue, 'I did not know when I spilt all your beads that you was knitting this bag for me—but you was so good-natured that I was sorry as ever I could be.'

'Sister, sister, did you paint these soldiers,' cried Hal; 'kiss me—you are the best sister that ever lived.'

'O, Anne, your doll is dressed just like mine—sister has even worked their pocket handkerchiefs. But you have a paint box—I am glad of that.'

'And you have an embroidered apron, and I am glad of that—oh, papa, does not sister do everything for us?'

'She does, my dear children,' said Mr Percival, who, though not of the melting order, was affected into tears by this little scene. 'Come here to me, Lizzy,' he said, drawing her aside and putting his arm around her, 'tell me, my dear good girl, what shall I give you?'

Lizzy held her blushing face for a moment on her father's bosom, and then courageously drawing back her head and rising her hand, and pointing to the ring, she replied, 'Give me leave, sir, to wear this gift from Harry Stuart?'

Mr Percival's brow clouded. 'How is this, Lizzy? did I not command you long ago to dismiss him from your thoughts.'

'Yes, papa, but I could not obey you.'

'Nonsense, nonsense, Lizzy.'

'I tried sir, indeed I did—but the more I tried the more I could not.'

'And so by the way of aiding your efforts you wish to keep this gewgaw with a forget me not engraven on it?'

'With your leave, sir, I would wear it. It will make no difference, papa. Harry has engraven the forget me not on my heart. There it is cut in, as the engravers say.'

Lizzy's frankness and perseverance astonished her father. 'There was something kin-