

The Voyage of Life.

A little boat was launched upon a stream to sail to some place far away. In it there was a tiny blue-eyed child, happy and joyous all the livelong day, caring only for the pleasures of the present and thinking little of the time to come.

The sun shone brightly in the heavens, while the water, dancing and sparkling, seemed to be covered with millions of diamonds, and all nature appeared to have put on the fairest and brightest colours. But it was not to be always thus. Some days after, a cloud obscured the sun, and the peaceful stream, becoming rough and swollen, roared like an angry lion. Then indeed fear seized on the heart of the youthful voyager; but all this soon passed away, for on the stream of childhood storms seldom last long,—they soon disperse, leaving a brighter glow of sunshine than there was before.

But there were many perils and hidden dangers to avoid. The banks were lined with sharp and cruel rocks, on which the little boat might have been dashed to pieces. Their ugly forms were hidden by bright and many coloured flowers, among which the gaudy butterflies fluttered about from blossom to blossom. Often the child would fain have plucked the brilliant prize, for he thought not of the hidden rocks. But there was an unseen friend to direct his course, who warned him of his danger. Once, indeed, his waywardness had brought the boat too near to the shore, and he put forth his hand to pluck a scarlet blossom, but it was scarcely in his grasp when it drooped and faded away, and ere the look of disappointment had passed from his face he saw that the sides of his boat had been grazed and in some places cut by a projecting cliff. But the time came when the boat should leave the stream of Childhood and sail out into the ocean of Life, the wide, wide world. Fear and joy were mingled in the young voyager's heart, for he knew that worse dangers than he had ever yet encountered were before him, and that many a strong and stately vessel had sunk a wreck beneath the waves of that rough sea. But he longed for a change, and felt an inward joy when he thought that he would no more be confined by the banks of the narrow stream, but would steer his course which way he pleased over the mighty ocean.

Years have passed,—and casting our eyes over that wide expanse of water, what do we see? We see the sky black as night, illumined only by vivid flashes of lightning; we hear deafening peals