

# Happy Days

## NELSIE'S MESSAGE.

BY KATE W. HAMILTON.

NELSIE wanted to look across to the "Point," and that was an all-sufficient reason why Grandfather Burton should patiently hold the glass on his chin, and Grandfather Stone should assist him by steadying the little maiden. She was a fainter bit of childhood—this little one at whom the two old men looked so lovingly—than is usually seen in a fishing village. Miriam thought of it as with basket under her arm, she paused to look at the group. She had taken good care of her motherless little sister, the child had lacked nothing.

"If one grandad can't make quite a fool of her t'other one can finish it," said the mocking voice of some one passing along the path.

Miriam turned quickly and saw the torn hat and weatherbeaten face of old Ben. He did not look particularly pleasant, he seldom did.

"Love never hurt anybody yet," answered Miriam.

"Don't know—never had no chance to try it," he retorted, stalking on.

"What did old Ben want to try? Didn't he ever look through a glass as big as grandpa's?" asked Nelsie, catching part of a sentence as she joined her sister.

"He said he'd never tried being loved, if that was what he meant," said Miriam, doubtfully. "I think it's likely he hasn't such a man as he is!"



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But the idea seemed dreadful to tender little Nelsie.

"Doesn't anybody love him? Not anybody?" she asked.

She questioned one grandpa, and learned that old Ben lived for years as he did now—all alone. She questioned the other grandpa, and was told that Ben was

Ben "'Cause I've got something to tell you—something so good! There is somebody loves you, and he's been loving all this long, long time, only I s'pose you didn't know it—the Lord Jesus!"

"How d'ye know?" asked Ben after staring at her a moment in blank astonished silence.

always a surly fellow, caring for nobody but himself.

"But maybe that's because there isn't any body to care for him," insisted Nelsie. "He said he'd never had a chance to try being loved, and he never can, because he don't belong to anybody."

All day the troubling thought ran through her play, and came back more persistently still when her head was on its pillow for the night. She pictured the lonely little cabin, "dark and dirty," Miriam had called it—where there was nobody to welcome him home at night. Nobody to watch him coming or going. But with the morning a happy thought came to Nelsie—a thought a full of comfort that she could not rest until she had carried it to Ben himself. The moment she was free from the light tasks Miriam imposed, she hurried away and found the old boatman in his boat.

"Jes' goin' down the cove for some drift wood," he said, surprised by her eager call.

"May I go too?" she asked, clambering into the boat too intent upon her message to wait for reply or to think of fearing surly