

Poor Mary could not speak. She could only murmur her broken confused thanks, and after making arrangements to be at the Manor early the next morning, she took her departure. She saw the lady last lying back exhausted on her pillow with an expression on her gentle face which was almost too holy for earth, while her eyes were fixed upon the illuminated text which hung on the opposite wall, "At evening time it shall be light."

In the morning Mary Hudson and her baby went up to the Manor. But the gentle voice which would have spoken its kindly words of welcome was hushed for ever, and the wail of the motherless babe echoed dismally through the long passages of the old mansion.

Years passed away, and still nurse Hudson lived on at the Manor, a pale quiet woman, never coming out of herself or warming into cheerfulness except when she was alone with her two boys, the young heir, and her own little James. A bright beautiful boy was young Lionel Hayes, daring, impetuous, and affectionate, bidding fair to be spoilt by all with whom he came in contact. He was his father's idol; bluff hearty Sir John was tender as a woman with his motherless boy. They said a tear would come from his eye whenever the distant prospect of Lionel's school days was alluded to. "Pooh," he said, "the lad needn't go to school for many a long day. You must teach him, nurse, the things his mother would have had him know."

And so poor Mary tried to instruct Lionel in all that had made his mother so happy in her death.

Sometimes he would listen; but oftener he was gazing longingly out of the window as if he wished to be chasing the butterflies across the lawn, or swimming his boat in the pond, while James would stand drinking in the words which fell from his mother's lips, and begging for stories of the holy men and women of old. He was a pale, sickly-looking, most people said a plain, child; but there were depths of earnestness in the dark grey eyes, telling that the mind was full of grave thoughts which every one could not fathom.

He was the best boy in the village school, the master said; the most steady and truth-telling, the most attentive to the vicar's lessons, and the best behaved in church.

The good vicar often wished that his pupil, the young squire, who went to the vicarage every morning for two hours' instruction in Latin and history, was half as attentive as his little foster brother.

Perhaps the different characters of the two boys may be best understood by the following incident of their early days.

One evening, as they were playing together, some childish dispute arose. Lionel, in his hasty temper, struck his companion a sharp blow. Poor James's eyes filled with tears; the colour rushed to his pale cheek, and his eye flashed fire. His mother entering the room that instant perceived the state of affairs, and asked the cause of the quarrel. Neither answered; and Master Lionel stalked out, saying that he would not submit to be bullied by a woman and a beggar's brat, and he would tell his father. James trembled. "Oh, mother, what will Sir John say to me?"

"Don't be afraid of what Sir John will say, my boy; ask God to forgive children who grieve His Holy Spirit by saying hard unkind words to each other." The child did not answer, although truth to tell he had been wholly in the right at the beginning of the quarrel. He too went out of the room, and then kneeling by the side of his little bed, he asked for help to rule his emper that he might not provoke his dear Master Lionel.