

KITTY CANNOT LEARN TO SPELL.

MABEL had a pleasant home, and many nice things about her; and one would have supposed she was very happy indeed—as happy that is to say as little children can be in any part of the world. But, as is always the case, something was wanting to make her happiness complete. And what do you think that was? Why, we will tell you: she had no one to play with. There were plenty of young folks in the neighborhood; but they were all either too big and too old for Mabel to play with, or they were quite babies, and therefore she did not know what to do.

Sometimes she talked to her doll and played with it; but the doll was not alive, and so she got tired of it.

But her Aunt Eliza had a pretty little kitty. It was a very pretty cat, and had the prettiest ways that ever were known for a little creature of that kind. And so Mabel thought that little kitty would make the best playfellow she could get. Sometimes she would play with it in one way and sometimes in another; for kitty was very patient and would put up with a good deal of playfulness and teasing without getting cross. Mabel would sometimes dress her up in doll's clothes and rock her in her doll's cradle; or ride her in a cart, or hold her in her arms and sing "lullaby" to her. But there is a limit to all forbearance. And this limit was reached when Mabel tried to teach pussy to spell. She had written down the letters C—A—T on paper, and holding kitty tight, she pointed out the letters with a pen. But cats cannot learn to spell our words. They have a very limited language of their own. It only consists of two or three words. One of these is—"Pussessess"—and this word kitty used on the occasion referred to. Now it is very pleasing to see little children fond of dumb animals, and it does them a great deal of good to cultivate habits of kindness that may be very beneficial to themselves and others in after life. But in their playful freaks with pet animals, they must never forget the danger there is of teasing them to such an extent that it sometimes leads to actual cruelty.

"ONLY A LITTLE FAULT."

STORY FOR YOUNG FOLKS.

CHAPTER I.

Somewhere in Normandy, not very far from an old-fashioned town, with high houses and narrow streets, there is an old chateau where the family of the De Bersacs had lived ever since Delphine, who was the eldest of four children, could remember. It was a pleasant place; the old grey stone walls of the house being covered in many parts by ivy, while over the portico, where the De Bersac arms were emblazoned, there twined a splendid wisteria and *gloire de Dijon* rose-tree. The grounds were extensive; and about half a mile from the gates were a few cottages, where some peasants lived happily and peacefully.

Delphine was just eleven years old; then came Mathilde, then Victor, and lastly, Eugenie—the latter a most winning child of five years old. Delphine was a very pretty attractive child, with a singularly happy nature, and very winning ways. When Madame de Bersac thought over her children's characters and dispositions, she often felt how sweet and lovable Delphine was. She was frank and open, docile and submissive to those in authority over her, gentle and unselfish; in short, her mother could think of but one fault which was very prominent in Delphine's character. Sometimes in the twilight, when the younger children were in bed, and Delphine came and had a quiet talk with her mother, the latter used to speak to her of this defect in her, and Delphine as often as not used to answer—

"But it is only a little fault, mamma, really a very little fault, if, as you say, I am so careless."

"It may appear that to you, now, my dear child," her mother often replied, "but, if you do not try and cure yourself of it, it will grow to be so strong that it will be hard for you to blind yourself to the fact of its sinfulness."

"Sinfulness, mamma?" asked Del-

phine one day; "how can that be—such a little thing cannot be a sin?"

"It may grow into one, or lead you into one," said Madame de Bersac; "and when I said you should cure yourself of it, remember that I did not mean that you could do that by yourself. God will help you, if you faithfully watch against your fault, and try not to fall into it."

But the weeks and days passed on, and Delphine remained ever the same. Sometimes she took a fit of trying to be careful, but it did not last long, and she needed to learn that she must not trust in herself or her own efforts unaided by God, if she wanted to persevere and to conquer.

That afternoon when Delphine joined her mother in the summer-house, the latter asked her if she had finished arranging the flowers.

"What flowers, mamma?" asked Delphine.

"Why, the red roses that your papa brought from—last night, that Monsieur Farville had given him. I saw him give them to you, and you said you would put them in a basin of water for the night, and arrange them in the vases this morning."

As Madame de Bersac spoke, the colour mounted to Delphine's cheek.

"Oh, mamma, I am very sorry, but I was in a hurry last night, and just threw them on the school-room table. I will run and see if they are faded; and without waiting for any more, Delphine ran off, and soon returned holding a bunch of faded roses.

"Do you think they will revive, mamma," she asked sadly, reading her mother's reproachful look lightly.

"No, dear, they are quite faded. In

this heat you might have known that being the whole night out of water would fade them. It was very careless of you, Delphine, not to look after them."

Delphine hung her head.

"Yes," continued her mother, "and I am particularly sorry, as you know we have no roses this year in the rosery, and I wanted to take a few of these to the poor little Claude, who is so fond of flowers, and especially red roses. However, it is useless grieving over that," said Madame de Bersac, as she saw Delphine's eyes fill with tears. Claude was a lame child, a great *protège* of the family, and Delphine was really sorry to think of how her carelessness had deprived him of this pleasure.

"I wish I was not so careless, mamma," said Delphine, laying the faded roses down on the rustic table that stood in the centre of the summer-house.

"I hope you will do more than wish," said her mother, "and that you will pray that you may be watchful."

Delphine did resolve to watch, and for a few days she was really so very careful and attentive to all said to her that she had rarely to be reproved for carelessness. Her books were all put in their proper places, her flowers all watered, her birds attended to, and when she went into town one day with Nannette, the old nurse, and was entrusted with some commissions, she actually tried to remember all the instructions, and executed them to her mother's satisfaction.

Madame de Bersac at length began to see such a marked change that she trusted Delphine more than she was formerly able to do; and so one day she

gave permission that Delphine should take Eugenie out to join Nannette, who had gone with Mathilde about a mile from the chateau gates. Delphine walked and Eugenie rode her donkey—a sleek well-kept animal, who looked as if he had much kind treatment and no blows.

Eugenie chattered and laughed, and enjoyed her ride, thoroughly; for the road was a pleasant one, and on each side were high trees, which made it quite shady on that hot afternoon.

Delphine walked by the side of the donkey, and as she did so, she thought how lovely Eugenie looked, her long hair falling beneath her large white hat, round which was a long white feather, and her cheeks slightly flushed by the exertion of riding.

"We are to have bread and honey, are we not, at a farm-house?" asked Eugenie, presently.

"Yes, and new milk; and if the apricots are ripe, mamma said we were to have some."

"How much further is it, Fifi?" asked Eugenie, who always called her sister by that, a pet name of her own making.

"Not far. See there to the left, a farm-house. It is there where we are to have our supper. And, O Eugenie, we must not forget mamma's message?"

"What is it?" asked Eugenie.

"It is to take this parcel to a cottage near the church. Mamma explained it to me."

(To be continued.)



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