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Saved in a Basket, or Daph and Her Charge.

[By special request we publish this story which has been remembered with pleasure by one who read it thirty years ago. To those whose memory does not go back so far it will have all the interest of novelty. It seems specially timely just now, when so many forget how closely knit were the bonds of love and service between many a master and slave; and thinking only of the brutality on one side, the degradation on the other, lose hope for a race so many of whom are struggling bravely up in spite of difficulties and temptations.]

The sweetest lives are those to duty wed,
Whose deeds both great and small,
Are close-knit strands of an unbroken thread
Where love ennobles all.
The world may sound no trumpets, ring no bells;
The Book of Life the shining record tells.
Thy love shall chant its own beatitudes
After its own life's working. A child's kiss
Set on thy sighing lips shall make thee glad;
A poor man served by thee shall make thee rich;
A sick man helped by thee shall make thee strong;
Thou shalt be served thyself by every sense
Of service which thou renderest.
—Elizabeth Browning.

CHAPTER I.

THE MOONLIGHT VISITOR

The evening air stole gently into a quiet room in a southern island, more than sixty years ago.

There were no casements in the wide windows; the heavy shutters were thrown back, and the moonlight poured in in long unbroken streams, across the polished and uncarpeted floor.

Within the large, pleasant room, two lovely children were sleeping in their pretty little crib, like birds in a nest.

Suddenly there was a cautious tread in the hall, and then a strange figure stood silently in the moonlight. Without candle or taper might have been plainly seen the short, strongly-built woman whose black face and gay turban formed a striking contrast to the fair children in their white loose night-dresses.

Who was the dark intruder, and what was her secret errand in that quiet room?

It was Daph—black Daph; and when you have heard more about her, you can better judge whether she came as a friend, or an enemy, to the sleeping children of her master. Although not visible to the human eye, we shall find, before the story is finished, that the guardian angels of the little ones were surely there.

The large mirror, bright in the moonlight, seemed to have an irresistible attrac-

tion for the negro; and the sight of her black face fully reflected there, made her show her white teeth in a grin of decided approval. The pleased expression, however, disappeared almost instantly, as she said, impatiently, 'Foolish darkey, spendin' dese precious time looking at your own black face!'

At this whispered exclamation, the children stirred uneasily. 'If I mus', I mus'!' said Daph resolutely, as she drew from her pocket a box containing two small pills. With the pills in her hand she approach-

eyes the little girl sank back on her pillow, and was soon in the sweet sleep of innocence.

As soon as Daph saw the small, slender hands lie open and relaxed, she stole round to the side of the little boy. She raised his head gently on her arm, and placed in his mouth a bit of the same juicy fruit she had given his sister, containing another of those hidden pills, which she seemed so anxious to administer. The child did not wake; but the sweet morsel was pleasant to his taste, and no doubt



DAPH AND HER CHARGE.

ed the bedside of the little girl, who was now half sitting up, and looking at Daph with the bewildered expression of one suddenly aroused from sleep.

Daph put aside the mosquito bar, and said coaxingly, 'Take dis, Miss Lou, quick as you can, and don't go for waking Mas-sa Charley, asleep da aside of you.'

Daph had slipped the pill into a juicy bit of pine-apple, which she seemed to have had ready for the purpose, and the child instantly swallowed it. With one trustful, pleasant glance from her large blue

mingled in his baby-dreams of the joys of the pleasant world in which he had passed but a short time.

Daph now set to work busily to fill a huge basket, which she brought from some place of deposit near at hand. The drawers of the bureau, and the contents of the elegant dressing-case she thoroughly overhauled, making such selections as seemed to please her fancy, and being withal somewhat dainty in her choice. Children's clothing, of the finest and best, formed the lowest layer in the basket; then followed