

"But we are not uncared for," said the sprightly daisy, as he opened more widely his little silver petals, and gazed up more steadily than ever with his bright eye into the heaven above him.

"Possibly," answered the tulip, somewhat annoyed at the dandy's assurance. "Still, you must allow that it is a very fine thing to wear gay colors, and to lift your head so high, and to feel yourself of some importance."

"But I'm not sure that growing on a tall stem, and wearing all the colors of the rainbow, can make us either happier or more important," said the daisy stoutly.

"What!" cried the tulip in a pet; but then she checked herself, and said, with an air of disdain, "The happiness may be a matter of opinion, perhaps; but a tall stem and gay colors do make one more important. Every one stoops to look at me."

"Yes, and most people pass us by, I know; but Heaven does not forget us," the daisy replied.

"Very fine to talk about Heaven down there. A great deal you must know about it!" And here the conversation ended; for some children came laughing by, and one of them, springing forward, snatched little daisy from his nest in the grass, and carried him away. Night came on, and the flowers were silent in the darkness; but when morning broke, and the sunshine slowly returned to the garden, the tulip, looking around for some one to chatter to, found, to her surprise, the violet which had been crushed the day before standing up among its leaves, seeming as fresh, and giving forth as sweet a fragrance as if nothing uncomfortable had happened.

"Why, how is this, little one?" was the impatient exclamation. "Was it only pretence, after all? or how have you managed to hold up your head again?"

"It is as little daisy said," replied the violet; "Heaven did not forget me."

"What do you mean, pray? What a nonsensical idea to be sure! Heaven think of you? See how high it is above your little head!"

"I know," said the violet; "yet it cares for me, for all that. It sent me soft refreshing dews last night, and they gave me strength."

The tulip looked rather puzzled, and at that moment caught sight of some small glittering things among the violet leaves.

"Oh! what lovely diamonds!" she cried quickly: they are just fit for such as I am; I must have them, violet."

"They are the dews—the soft, cool dews of which I told you," was the reply.

"Oh, but I must have them!" exclaimed the selfish beauty. "How is it I am left without any?"

"I don't know, really," said the violet, feeling sorry for the vexation of its neighbor. "They must surely have passed close to you on their way to me; they must have touched you: perhaps they glided off your smooth petals; but they found a resting-place, though a poor one, down here."

The tulip only said: "But I must have them: how glorious I would be with such a coronet?"

"Let little violet keep her dew-drops," said a graceful lady-fern, as she bent from the rock at whose feet the violet grew; "let little violet keep her dew-drops. You might have had some, if you had not stiffened and straightened yourself so proudly that they found no resting place, and therefore glided away."

The tulip was about to answer angrily; but again some passers-by stopped near her, and she drew herself up to be admired.

"Exquisitely perfect! a queen of flowers!" was the remark that gratified the poor vain flower.

"And how sweet the scent is," added another.

"Oh, that is not from the tulips: there are violets somewhere," answered the first speaker; and then the two passed on.

"Violets somewhere," repeated the tulip—"violets somewhere; that is all you get, you see; Come, do confess that it must be very nice to be so praised and noticed as I am."

"I assure you, the little violets would be very much missed if they were to go away," said the fern, taking the part of her meek and humble friend; "sick people love them, and little chil-

dren love them, and the poor love them, and so do the rich. If you are well known for your beautiful colors, they are well known for their sweetness; if you are admired and praised, they are loved; if you are visited and petted by the rich and great, they are visited by heaven."

The tulip seemed particularly vexed whenever she was in any way reproved; but not exactly liking to be rude to the lady-fern, who was a stranger, she looked about for a quarrel elsewhere. Presently she heard a rustling and a whispering at her feet; the little violets were stirring gently.

"What are you about down there?" asked the tulip pettishly. "You are trying to make me think you have found some one to notice you; but that will not do."

"Hush, hush, tulip, silly one!" said the lady-fern as she bent gently like the violets; "hush, silly one! the little violet has some one to notice it; there is a soft breeze come from heaven to comfort it and bid it bear neglect."

"A breeze from heaven gone to talk to that little lowly thing, while I am passed by without a word! Oh, I dare say! I will never believe it," answered the tulip scornfully.

"But it is so," said the fern; "you would have been noticed by the breeze from heaven, only you held yourself so straight and stiff that you could not feel it, and it passed you by."

"Oh, lady-fern, lady-fern! am I losing all the heavenly visitors because I am a tulip?" cried the flower—still, however, without bowing her head.

"Nay, not because you are a tulip, exactly," replied the lady-fern; and, as a fair white tulip close at hand bent lowly on her slender stalk, she added, see your neighbor there; the breeze of heaven is talking to her also, for she does not stiffen and straighten herself so foolishly; her heart, too, is full of the dews of heaven, because she opens it to receive them; but you, poor beauty, you shut yours up so closely, and you hold yourself up so proudly."

"CLEAN HANDS."

"I say, Harry, what has made you take this wonderful clean fit all of a sudden?" asked John Shelford of his little brother, who was drying his hands after a vigorous pumping. "This is the seventh time I have seen you go to the pump and wash your hands to-day."

"Because I want to be strong," replied Harry.

"Well, but washing your hands won't make you strong."

"Yes it will, the Bible says so."

"I don't believe it does," said John.

"I'm sure it does, though," returned Harry positively; "papa read it at prayers this morning: 'He that has clean hands shall be stronger and stronger,'" and Harry waved his arms in the air, and went through sundry gymnastic exercises, as if to see whether his numerous washings during the day had increased his strength.

"Well, you don't suppose that means really clean hands: you are a silly boy. You have had all your trouble for nothing."

"No, I haven't. I'll ask papa to-night if the Bible doesn't really mean what it says."

So in the evening, when Mr. Shelford had come home from business, as soon as he had finished his tea, Harry began:

"Papa, doesn't the Bible say that if you have 'clean hands' you'll be stronger?"

"Certainly, my boy," said Mr. Shelford, smiling; "I see you remember what we read this morning—how Job said: 'The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.'"

"There," cried Harry, "I knew I was right; and washing your hands will make you strong, won't it?"

"It is very good for little boys to wash themselves, and it helps to make them strong and healthy if they keep clean; but there are some stains that we can't get out with soap and water, and it was freedom from these stains that the Bible meant. The other day I saw a little boy lift his hand to strike his sister, that made it far dirtier than if it had been making mud-pies for a whole day."

Harry blushed and his papa went on:

"When I was a little boy, I was taught that it

was my duty to keep my hands from picking and stealing,—picking, you know, means taking little things that don't belong to you; like stealing lumps of sugar out of mamma's cupboard, or picking fruit of the young trees that I tell you not to touch."

"Then Eve made her hands dirty when she took the forbidden fruit," put in John, who feared the conversation was getting personal.

"Yes, indeed she did, and no one can tell the number of soiled hands that have been the result of that action."

Now John, can you remember the name of a man who 'stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the Church?' That made his hands very dirty indeed."

"That was Herod, papa, when he killed James and put Peter into prison."

"Yes; and do you know who tried to clear himself from the blame of a very terrible act by washing his hands?"

Both boys were silent, and Mr. Shelford asked again:

"Who took water and washed his hands, saying, 'I am innocent of the blood of this just person?'"

"Oh! that was Pilate, papa," said Harry, "when he let the people crucify Jesus."

"Yes, but the stain of the sin was just as much on his soul after he had washed his hands as before, and it is the same with our sins, whether we call them little or great; we cannot get rid of them or their consequences, however we try to clear ourselves. No washing of our own will do it. So what must we do, Harry? When you make your hands dirty with wrong things, how can they be made clean?"

"God can wash them, papa; that is what you mean, isn't it? because David said, 'Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.'"

"And Peter," added John, "asked the Lord Jesus to wash not only his feet but his hands and his head; but Jesus said he need only have his feet washed."

"Yes, because, as the Lord said, he was washed already, by faith in Christ's cleansing word. It was the same cleansing that David meant when he prayed, 'Create in me a clean heart, O God.' And I want my dear boys to pray too."

"Wash me, but not my feet alone, My hands, my head, my heart."

Then you will have the blessing that is promised to him that 'hath clean hands and a pure heart; and you will every day grow 'stronger and stronger' in the best kind of strength, till you are like those to whom St. John said, 'I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong.'

TRUST.

A good woman was visiting among the poor in London one cold winter's day. She was trying to open the door of a third-story room in a wretched-looking house, when she heard a little voice inside say, "Pull the string up high—pull the string up high." She looked up and saw a string. She pulled it, when it lifted a latch, and the door opened into a room where she found two little half-naked children, all alone. They looked cold and hungry.

"Do you take care of yourselves, little ones?" said the good woman.

"No, ma'am, God takes care of us," replied the elder of the children.

"You have no fire on this cold day. Are you not very cold?"

"Oh, when we are cold we creep under the quilt, and I put my arms round Tommy, and Tommy puts his arms round me, and we say, 'Now I lay me, and then we get warm,'" said the little girl.

"And what do you have to eat, pray?" asked the visitor.

"When grandmother comes home she brings us something. Grandmother says we are God's sparrows, and he has enough for us; and so we say, 'Our Father, and 'daily bread' every day. God is our Father."

Tears came into the eyes of this good woman. She had sometimes felt afraid that she might be left to starve; but these two little "sparrows," perched alone in that cold upper room, taught her a sweet lesson of trust in the power of God, which she felt that she would not soon forget.