

Downwards he darted with a smile of joy, longing to shine his very brightest, and give a message of love and hope from his brothers who were prisoners in the sky.

There was a poor weed growing by herself in the middle of a field. She was a wild creature, not very gay or beautiful, and with only one small blossom. This morning she was feeling very sad, and had been thinking, being chilly and uncomfortable, that she had better give up growing any more. She had neither much scent nor pretty colours, nor did she think that anybody cared about her; in fact, she had made up her mind that it would be better if she were to die.

But at this moment down came the little sunbeam right into her face, kissed away her tears, and shone so lovingly upon her that her one blossom looked quite bright in the dull morning, and actually began to smell sweet, so that a bee, who was passing by, very hungry and low-spirited, stopped by her, and popping his busy sucker down the middle of her tiny flower, found a drop of sweet honey.

"Buzz, buzz," said the bee, "that's the first taste I have had this morning; thank you, good little weed," and, as he flew away, the heart of the poor wild blossom was full of joy.

Not far from the field stood a palace. Very mournful it looked, under the dark sky, with its grey walls and ivy-covered towers, as if it wanted a whole flood of sunshine. It happened that just when the little sunbeam darted down through the hole in the clouds the old prince was standing at one of the windows, and he noticed its bright ray—all the more striking from its contrast with the gloomy sky—falling on a tumble-down cottage, which stood at one corner of his park. As it caught his eye this thought passed through his mind: "That little sunbeam goes straight to the poor cottage, and tries to cheer it with its light. Ought not I to do the same?" And he resolved in future to think more about his poor neighbours.

Now, I do not know how long the clouds kept up their quarrel, or when they again became fellow-workers with the sunbeams, but I have heard that, in the end, love is sure to be the conqueror, and that when a quarrel is only on one side, it cannot possibly last long; so I suspect that cloudy morning turned out a very bright day; that the bees had all had their breakfast; that the corn grew riper and riper, and the children were as merry as ever. Only I hope the sunbeams have told them their secret, and that they will follow their example and give smiles and kind words wherever they go, for they may see that even little sunbeams can do good, and that we need not wait for great opportunities to shed on the dark spots of earth gleams of goodness and kindness, heavenly gleams from that world whose sunshine is LOVE.

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#### FIRST-FRUITS TO CHRIST.

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The Rev. Dr. Laws writes from Livingstonia, Central Africa:—"Yesterday I had the privilege of baptizing the first native who has sought this ordinance here. Albert Namalambé, mentioned by Mr. Reid in the journal, has thus come forward now fully to testify of his faith in Christ. It was a glad, solemn day. At half-past six this morning another inquirer came to me asking why he was not yet happy. This is now the third month during which he has been praying thrice daily for forgiveness and the true light; but he has not yet experienced the happiness which he notes as a characteristic of Albert's Christianity. These are precious fruits of past years. A week ago eight couples were married, and of these three couples have been taught to read and write in the school, while either the man or woman of other four couples have been taught likewise. This means a great deal for the new social life of this land. The morning now is breaking. All glory and praise be to our God!"