ments made, even down to the weekly washing. I'm sure I'd thought of everything, and planned everything, and nothing could have been straighter than it all would have been, if the baby had come to its time."

Grace listened wonderingly, but had no occasion to wonder long. Mrs. James bounced into the parlour. "What *do* you think, Grace? Priscilla Sprouter's baby was born last night."

Priscilla was the married daughter, united to a prosperous young grocer in the small town of Chickfield, Sussex, about forty miles from Brierwood. The unarithmetical infant, which had arrived before it was due, was Mrs. James Redmayne's second grandchild and Mrs. James had solemnly pledged herself to pay a fortnight's visit to Chickfield whenever the event should take place, in order to attend to the general welfare of her daughter's person and household. The usual nurse would be engaged, of course; but Mrs. James was a power paramount over that hireling.

The interesting event, however, was to have occurred in October, and all Mrs. James's arrangements were made accordingly: a reliable matron engaged to take the helm at Brierwood during her absence; a fortnight's suspension of those more solemn duties of brewing and preserving, which could not be performed without being duly provided for; and behold, here was a special messenger, mounted on a sturdy unkempt pony in the butcher interest, come with a letter announcing the untimely advent of a fine boy.

"Fine, indeed!" cried aunt Hannah contemptuously. "And please *will* I come at once; for father—that's William Sprouter—is so uneasy?"

"I suppose you must go, aunt," said Grace dubiously.

"You suppose I must do you? And a sieve and a half of Orleans plums in the back kitchen. Who do you suppose is to look after them?"

"Couldn't Mrs. Bush make the jam, aunt, if you must go?"

"Of course Mrs. Bush could. Every one that can put a saucepan on the fire will tell you they can make jam; and nice stuff it will be—a couple of inches deep in blue mould before it's been made a month. No, Grace, I am not the woman to treat your father's property like that. I shall make the jam, if I drop; and I suppose I must start off to Chickfield as soon as it's made. And I should like to know who's to see after Mr. Walgry's dinners when I'm gone."

"Couldn't I manage that, aunt Hannah? I don't think Mr. Walgrave is very particular about his dinners."

"Not particular; no, of course not: as long as everything is done to a turn, a man seems easy to please; but just try him with a shoulder of lamb half raw, or a slice of salmon boiled to a mash, and then see what he'll say. However, I must go to Priscilla for a fews days, at any rate, and things must take their chance here. I've sent Jack across to tell Mrs. Bush she must come directly; and I do hope, you'll show a little steadiness for once in a way, and see that your father's goods ain't wasted. If Mr. Walgrave wasn't a very quiet kind of gentleman, I shouldn't care about leaving you; but he isn't like the common run of single men—there's no nonsense about *him*."

Grace blushed fiery red, and had to turn suddenly to the window to hide her face. Mrs. James was too busy to perceive her confusion, skirmishing about the room, peering into a great roomy store-cupboard in a corner by the fireplace, filling the tea-caddy and the sugar-canister, calculating how much colonial produce ought to be consumed during her absence.

"You'll give Mrs. Bush a quarter of a pound of tea and half a pound of sugar for the week, remember, Grace—not a grain more. And don't be letting them have butcher's meat in the kitchen more than twice a week. If they can't eat good wholesome bacon, they must go without. Sarah knows the kind of dinners I get for Mr. Walgry; and Mrs. Bush is to cook for him. But be sure you see to everything with your own eyes, and give your orders to the butcher with your own lips. The broad-beans are to be eaten, mind, without any fuss about likes or dislikes: your uncle didn't sow them for the crows. And don't be giving all the damsons to Jack and Charley in puddings. I shall want to make damson cheese when I come back; and if they want to make themselves ill in their insides, there's plenty of windfalls that's good enough for *that*. And I should like to see those linen pillow-cases darned neatly when I come home. Miss Toulmin had a deal better have learnt you to mend house-linen than to *parlez vous Français*. I'm sure anything I give you to darn hangs about till I'm sick of the sight of it."

"I'll do the best I can, aunt," said Grace meekly. "Shall you be away long, do you think?"

"How can I tell, child? If Priscilla and the baby go on well, I sha'n't stop more than a week at the outside. But she's a delicate young woman, and there's no knowing what turn things may take. I shan't stop longer than I can help, you may take my word for that. And now I'm going into the best parlour to tell Mr. Walgry."

Grace sat down by the open window, fluttered strangely by this small domestic business. Her aunt would be away—the scrutiny of those sharp eyes removed from her; a week of almost perfect freedom before her—she could not help thinking that in her aunt's absence she would see more of the man she loved. She knew that he had been obliged to diplomatise a good deal in order to spend half an hour with her, now and then, without creating suspicion. It would be different now. For one happy week they might meet without restraint. And then the end of all days would come, and they must part. The bitter parting must come sooner or later; he had told her so in sober seriousness. She tried very hard to realise the fact, but could not. She was too much a child; and a week seemed almost an eternity of happiness.

"Will he be glad?" she said to herself. "O I wonder if he will be glad." If she could have looked into her lover's heart after he heard Mrs. Redmayne's announcement, she would have discovered that he was not glad.

"I wish I had gone away this morning, without any leave-taking," he said to himself; "to go now, when she has asked me to stay, would seem sheer brutality. And to stay, now that the dragon is going away, and we can be together all day long, is only heaping up misery for the future. I did not believe myself capable of being made unhappy by any woman; but it will be a hard struggle to forget this farmer's daughter. I wish I had never seen her. I wish I had never taken it into my head to come here. Pshaw! am I the kind of men to make a trouble out of any such sentimental absurdity as this? Why shouldn't I enjoy a week's innocent flirtation with a pretty girl, and then go back to my own world and forget her?"

And with this laudable intention Mr. Walgrave strolled out into the garden again, in the hope of meeting Grace.

He was disappointed, however, this time. Mrs. James was up to her eyes in preserving, and kept Grace in the kitchen with her, listening to solemn counsel upon all the details of domestic management. It was rather a hard thing to have to stop in the hot kitchen all through that lovely summer day, wiping out jam-pots, cutting and writing labels, and making herself useful in such small ways; but Grace, bore the infliction very meekly. Tomorrow there would be perfect liberty.

Mr. Walgrave prowled round the garden two or three times, then stretched himself at full length in the orchard, and slumbered for a little in the drowsy August noontide—a slumber in which his dreams were not pleasant—awoke unfreshed, went back to the house and reconnoitred, caught a glimpse of Grace in the kitchen through a latticed window half buried in ivy, lost his temper, and took up his fishing-rod and wandered out in search of an elderly and experienced pike he had been waging war with for the last six weeks; a wary brute, who thought no more of swallowing a hook than if it had been a sugar-plum, and had acquired, by long usage, a depraved appetite for fishing-tackle.

(To be continued.)

THE WATER-BABIES:

A FAIRY TALE FOR A LAND-BABY.

BY REV. CHARLES KINGSLEY, M. A.

CHAPTER V.—*Continued.*

"Now," said the baby, "come and help me, or I shall not have finished before my brothers and sisters come, and it is time to go home."

"What shall I help you at?"

"At this poor dear little rock; a great clumsy boulder came rolling by in the last storm, and knocked all its head off, and rubbed off all its flowers. And now I must plant it again with sea-weeds, and coral-line, and anemones, and I will make it the prettiest little rock-garden on all the shore."

So they worked away at the rock, and planted it, and smoothed the sand down round it, and capital fun they had till the tide began to turn. And then Tom heard all the other babies coming, laughing and singing and shouting and romping; and the noise they made was just like the noise of the ripple. So he knew that he had been hearing and seeing the water-babies all along; only he did not know them, because his eyes and ears were not opened.

And in they came, dozens and dozens of them, some bigger than Tom and some smaller, all in the neatest little white bathing-dresses; and when they found that he was a new baby they hugged him and kissed him, and then put him in the middle and danced round him on the sand, and there was no one so happy as poor little Tom.

"Now, then," they cried all at once, "we must come away home, we must come away home, or the tide will leave us dry. We have mended all the broken sea-weed, and put all the rock pools in order, and planted all the shells again in the sand, and nobody will see where the ugly storm swept in last week."

And this is the reason why the rock pools are always so neat and clean; because the water-babies come in shore after every storm, to sweep them out, and comb them down, and put them all to rights again.

Only where men are wasteful and dirty, and let sewers run into the sea, instead of putting the stuff upon the fields like thrifty reasonable souls; or throw herrings' heads, and dead dog-fish, or any other refuse, into the water; or in any way make a mess upon the shore, there the water-babies will not come, sometimes not for hundreds of years (for they cannot abide anything smelly or foul); but leave the sea-anemones and the crabs to clear away everything, till the good tidy sea has covered up all the dirt in soft mud and clean sand, where the water-babies can plant live cockles and whelks and razor-shells and sea-cucumbers and golden-combs, and make a pretty live garden again, after man's dirt is cleared away. And that, I suppose, is the reason why there are no water-babies at any watering-place which I have ever seen.

And where is the home of the water-babies? In St. Brandan's fairy isle.

Did you never hear of the blessed St. Brandan, how he preached to the wild Irish, on the wild wild Kerry coast; he and five other hermits, till they were weary and longed to rest? For the wild Irish would not listen to them, or come to confession and to mass, but liked better to brew potheen, and dance the pather o'peen, and knock each other over the head with shillelaghs, and shoot each other from behind turf-dykes, and steal each other's cattle, and burn each other's homes; till St. Brandan and his friends were weary of them, for they would not learn to be peaceable Christians at all.

So St. Brandan went out to the point of Old Dunmore, and looked over the old tide-way roaring round the Blasquets, at the end of all the world, and away into the ocean, and sighed—"Ah that I had wings as a dove!" And far away, before the setting sun, he saw a blue fairy sea, and golden fairy islands, and he said, "Those are the islands of the blest." Then he and his friends got into a hooker, and sailed away and away to the westward, and were never heard of more. But the people who would not hear him were changed into gorillas, and gorillas they are until this day.

And when St. Brandan and the hermits came to that fairy isle, they found it overgrown with cedars, and full of beautiful birds; and he sat down under the cedars, and preached to all the birds in the air. And they liked his sermons so well that they told the fishes in the sea; and they came, and St. Brandan preached to them; and the fishes told the water-babies, who live in the caves under the isle; and they came up by hundreds every Sunday, and St. Brandan got quite a neat little Sunday-school. And there he taught the water-babies for a great many hundred years, till his eyes grew too dim to see, and his beard grew so long that he dared not to walk for fear of treading on it, and then he might have tumbled down. And at last he and the five hermits fell asleep under the cedar shades, and there they sleep unto this day. But the fairies took to the water-babies, and taught them their lessons themselves.

And some say that St. Brandan will awake, and begin to teach the babies once more; but some think that he will sleep on, for better for worse, till the coming of the Congegrues. But, on still clear summer evenings, when the sun sinks down into the sea, among golden cloud-capes and cloud-islands, and locks and friths of azure sky, the sailors fancy that they see, away to westward, St. Brandan's fairy isle.

But whether men can see it or not, St. Brandan's Isle once actually stood there; a great land out in the ocean, which has sunk and sunk beneath the sea. Old Plato called it Atlantis, and told strange tales of the wise men who lived therein, and of the wars they fought in the old times. And from off that island came strange flowers, which linger still about this land:—the Cornish heath, and Cornish moneywort, and the delicate Venus's hair, and the London-pride which covers the Kerry mountains, and the little pink butterwort of Devon, and the great blue butterwort of Ireland, and the Connemara heath, and the bristle-fern of the Turk waterfall, and many a strange plant more; all fairy tokens left for wise men and good children from off St. Brandan's Isle.

And there were the water-babies in thousands, more than Tom, or you either, could count.—All the little children whom the good fairies take to, because their cruel mothers and fathers will not; all who are untaught and brought up heathens, and all who come to grief by ill-usage or ignorance or neglect; all the little children who are overlaid, or are given gin when they are young, or are let to drink out of hot kettles, or to fall into the fire; all the little children in alleys and courts, and tumble-down cottages, who die by fever, and cholera, and measles, and scarlatina, and many complaints which no one has any business to have, and which no one will have some day, when folks have common sense; and all the little children who have been killed by cruel masters, and wicked soldiers; they were all there, except, of course, the babies of Bethlehem who were killed by wicked King Herod; for they were taken straight to Heaven long ago, as everybody knows, and we call them the Holy Innocents.

But I wish Tom had given up all his naughty tricks, and left off tormenting dumb animals, now that he had plenty of playfellows to amuse him. Instead of that, I am sorry to say, he would meddle with the creatures, all but the water-snakes, but they would stand no nonsense. So he tickled the madrepores, to make them shut up; and frightened the crabs, to make them hide in the sand and peep out at him with the tips of their eyes; and put stones into the anemones' mouths to make them fancy that their dinner was coming.

The other children warned him, and said, "Take care what you are at. Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid is coming." But Tom never heeded them, being quite riotous with high spirits and good luck, till, one Friday morning early, Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid came indeed.

A very tremendous lady she was; and when the children saw her, they all stood in a row, very upright indeed, and smoothed down their bathing dresses, and put their hands behind them, just as if they were going to be examined by the inspector.

And she had on a black bonnet, and a black shawl, and no crinoline at all; and a pair of large green spectacles, and a great hooked nose, hooked so much that the bridge of it stood quite up above her eyebrows, and under her arm she carried a great birch-rod. Indeed, she was so ugly that Tom was tempted to make faces at her: but did not; for he did not admire the look of the birch-rod under her arm.

And she looked at the children one by one, and seemed very much pleased with them, though she never asked them one question about how they were behaving; and then began giving them all sorts of nice sea-things—sea-cakes, sea-apples, sea-oranges, sea-bullseyes, sea-toffee; and to the very best of all she gave sea-lees, made out of sea-cows' cream, which never melt under water.

And, if you don't quite believe me, then just think—What is more cheap and plentiful than sea-rock? Then why should there not be sea-toffee as well? And every one can find sea-lemons (ready quartered too)if they will look for them at low-tide; and sea-grapes too sometimes, hanging in bunches; and, if you will go to Nice, you will find the fish-market full of sea-fruit, which they call "frutta di mare:" though I suppose they call them "fruits de mer" now, out of compliment to that most successful, and therefore most immaculate, potentate who is seemingly desirous of hearing the blessing pronounced on those who remove their neighbour's landmark. And, perhaps, that is the very reason why the place is called Nice, because there are so many nice things in the sea there: at least, if it is not, it ought to be.

Now little Tom watched all these sweet things given away, till his mouth watered, and his eyes grew as round as an owl's. For he hoped that his turn would come at last; and so it did. For the lady called him up, and held out her fingers with something in them, and popped it into his mouth; and, lo and behold, it was a nasty cold hard pebble.

"You are a very cruel woman," said he, and began to whimper.

"And you are a very cruel boy; who puts pebbles into the sea-anemones' mouths, to take them in, and make them fancy that they had caught a good dinner! As you did to them, so I must do to you."

"Who told you that?" said Tom.

"You did yourself, this very minute."

Tom had never opened his lips; so he was very much taken aback indeed.

"Yes; every one tells me exactly what they have done wrong; and that without knowing it themselves. So there is no use trying to hide anything from me. Now go, and be a good boy, and I will put no more pebbles in your mouth, if you put none in other creatures'."

"I did not know there was any harm in it," said Tom.

"Then you know now. People continually say that to me; but I tell them, if you don't know that fire burns, that is no reason that it should not burn you; and if you don't know that dirt breeds fever, that is no reason why the fever should not kill you. The lobster did not know that there was any harm in getting into the lobster pot; but it caught him all the same."

"Dear me," thought Tom, "she knows everything!" And so she did, indeed.

"And so, if you do not know that things are wrong, that is no reason why you should not be punished for them, though not so much, not so much, my little man" (and the lady looked kindly, after all), "as if you did know."

"Well, you are a little hard on a poor lad," said Tom.

"Not at all; I am the best friend you ever had in all your life. But I will tell you; I cannot help punishing people when they do wrong. I like it no more than they do; I am often very, very sorry for them, poor things: but I cannot help it. If I tried not to do it, I should do it all the same. For I work by machinery, just like an engine; and am full of wheels and springs inside; and am wound up very carefully, so that I cannot help going."

"Was it long ago since they wound you up?" asked Tom. For he thought, the cunning little fellow, "She will run down some day: or they may forget to wind her up, as old Grimes used to forget to wind up his watch when he came in from the public-house: and then I shall be safe."

"I was wound up once and for all, so long ago that I forget all about it."

"Dear me," said Tom, "you must have been made a long time!"

"I never was made, my child; and I shall go for ever and ever; for I am as old as Eternity, and yet as young as Time."

And there came over the lady's face a very curious expression—very solemn, and very sad; and yet very, very sweet. And she looked up and away, as if she were gazing through the sea, and through the sky, at something far, far off; and as she did so, there came such a quiet, tender, patient, hopeful smile over her face, that Tom thought for the moment that she did not look ugly at all. And no more she did; for she was like a great many people who have not a pretty feature in their faces, and yet are lovely to behold, and draw little children's hearts to them at once; because, though the house is plain enough, yet from the windows a beautiful and good spirit is looking forth.

And Tom smiled in her face, she looked so pleasant for the moment. And the strange fairy smiled too, and said:

"Yes. You thought me very ugly just now, did you not?"

Tom hung down his head, and grew very red about the ears.

"And I am very ugly. I am the ugliest fairy in the world; and I shall be, till people behave themselves as they ought to do. And then I shall grow as handsome as my sister, who is the loveliest fairy in the world; and her name is Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby. So she begins where I end, and I begin where she ends; and those who will not listen to her must listen to me, as you will see. Now, all of you run away, except Tom; and he may stay and see what I am going to do. It will be a very good warning for him to begin with, before he goes to school.

"Now, Tom, every Friday I come down here and call up all who have ill-used little children, and serve them as they served the children."

And at that Tom was frightened, and crept under a stone; which made the two crabs who lived there very angry, and frightened their friend the butter-fish into flapping hysterics; but he would not move for them.

And first she called up all the doctors who give little children so much physic (they were most of them old ones; for the young ones have learnt better, all but a few army surgeons, who still fancy that a baby's inside is much like a Scotch grenadier's), and she set them all in a row; and very rueful they looked; for they knew what was coming.

And first she pulled all their teeth out; and then she bled them all round; and then she dosed them with calomel, and jalap, and salts and senna, and brimstone, and treacle; and horrible faces they made: and then she gave them a great emetic of mustard and water, and no basons; and began all over again: and that was the way she spent the morning.

And then she called up a whole troop of foolish ladies, who pinch up their children's waists and toes; and she laced them all up in tight stays, so that they were choked and sick, and their noses grew red, and their hands and feet swelled; and then she crammed their poor feet into the most dreadfully tight boots, and made them all dance, which they did most clumsily indeed; and then she asked them how they liked it; and when they said not at all, she let them go; because they had only done it out of foolish fashion, fancying it was for their children's good, as if wasps' waists and pigs' toes could be pretty, or wholesome, or of any use to anybody.

Then she called up all the careless nursery-maids, and stuck pins into them all over, and wheeled them about in perambulators with tight straps across their stomachs and their heads and arms hanging over the side, till they were quite sick and stupid, and would have had sun-strokes; but, being under the water, they could only have water-strokes; which, I assure you, are nearly as bad, as you will find if you will try to sit under a mill wheel. And mind—when you hear a rumbling at the bottom of the sea, sailors will tell you that it is a ground-swell: but now you know better. It is the old lady wheeling the maids about in perambulators.

And by that time she was so tired, she had to go to luncheon.

And after luncheon she set to work again, and called upon the cruel schoolmasters—whole regiments and brigades of them; and, when she saw them, she frowned most terribly, and set to work in earnest, as if the best part of the day's work was to come. More than half of them were nasty, dirty, frowzy, grubby, smelly old monks, who, because they dare not hit a man of their own size, amused themselves with beating little children instead; as you may see in the picture of old Pope Gregory (good man and true though he was, when he meddled with things which he did understand), teaching children to sing their fa-fa-mi-fa with a cat-o'-nine-tails under his chair; but, because they never had any children of their own, they took into their heads (as some folks do still) that they were the only people in the world who knew how to manage children; and they first brought into England, in the old Anglo-Saxon times, the fashion of treating free boys, and girls too, worse than you would treat a dog or a horse; but Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid has caught them all long ago; and given them many a taste of their own rods; and much good may it do them.

And she boxed their ears, and thumped them over the head with rulers, and paddled their hands with canes, and told them that they told stories, and were this and that sort of bad people; and the more they were very indignant, and stood upon their honour, and declared that they told the truth, the more she declared they were not, and that they were telling lies; and at last she birched them all round soundly with her great birch rod, and set them each an imposition of three hundred thousand lines of Hebrew to learn by heart before she came back next Friday. And at that they cried and howled so, that their breaths came all up through the sea like bubbles out of soda-water; and that is one reason of the bubbles in the sea. There are others: but that is the one which principally concerns little boys. And by that time she was so tired that she was glad to stop; and, indeed, she had done a very good day's work.

Tom did not quite dislike the old lady: but he could not help thinking her a little spiteful—and no wonder if she was, poor old soul; for, if she has to wait to grow handsome till people do as they would be done by, she will have to wait a very long time.

Poor old Mrs. Bedonebyasyoudid! she has a great deal of hard work before her, and had better have been born a washerwoman, and stood over a tub all day; but, you see, people cannot always choose their own profession.

But Tom longed to ask her one question; and after all, whenever she looked at him, she did not look cross at all; and now and then there was a funny smile in her face, and she chuckled to herself in a way which gave Tom courage, and at last he said:

"Pray, ma'am, may I ask you a question?"

"Certainly, my little dear."

"Why don't you bring all the bad masters here, and serve them out too? The battles that knock about the poor collier-boys; and the nailers that file off their lads' noses and hammer their fingers; and all the master sweeps, like my master Grimes? I saw him fall into the water long ago; so I surely expected he would have been here. I'm sure he was bad enough to me."

Then the old lady looked so very stern that Tom was quite frightened, and sorry that he had been so bold. But she was not angry with him. She only answered, "I look after them all the week round; and they are in a very different place from this, because they knew that they were doing wrong."

She spoke very quietly; but there was something in her voice which made Tom tingle from head to foot, as if he had got into a shoal of sea-nettles.

"But these people," she went on, "did not know that they were doing wrong: they were only stupid and impatient; and therefore I only punish them till they become patient, and learn to use their common sense like reasonable beings. But as for chimney-sweeps, and collier-boys, and nailer-lads, my sister has set good people to stop all that sort of thing; and very much obliged to her I am; for if she could only stop the cruel masters from ill-using poor children, I should grow handsome at least a thousand years sooner. And now do you be a good boy, and do as you would be done by, which they did not; and then, when my sister, Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby, comes on Sunday, perhaps she will take notice of you, and teach you how to behave. She understands that better than I do." And so she went.

Tom was very glad to hear that there was no chance of meeting Grimes again, though he was a little sorry for him, considering that he used sometimes to give him the leavings of the beer: but he determined to be a very good boy all Saturday; and he was, for he never frightened one crab, nor tickled any live corals, nor put stones into the sea-anemones' mouths, to make them fancy they had got a dinner; and, when Sunday morning came, sure enough, Mrs. Doasyouwouldbedoneby came too. Whereat all the little children began dancing and clapping their hands, and Tom danced too with all his might.

And as for the pretty lady, I cannot tell you what the colour of her hair was, or of her eyes: no more could Tom; for, when any one looks at her, all they can think of is, that she has the sweetest, kindest, tenderest, funniest, merriest face they ever saw, or want to see. But Tom saw that she was a very tall woman, as tall as her sister; but instead of being gnarly, and horny, and scaly, and prickly, like her, she was the most nice, soft, fat, smooth, pussy, cuddly, delicious creature who ever nursed a baby; and she understood babies thoroughly, for she had plenty of her own, whole rows and regiments of them, and has to this day. And all her delight was, whenever she had a spare moment, to play with babies, in which she showed herself a woman of sense; for babies are the best company, and the pleasantest playfellows, in the world; at least, so all the wise people in the world think. And therefore when the children saw her, they naturally all caught hold of her, and pulled her till she sat down on a stone, and climbed into her lap, and clung round her neck, and caught hold of her hands; and then they all put their thumbs into their mouths, and began cuddling and purring like so many kittens, as they ought to have done. While those who could get nowhere else sat down on the sand, and cuddled her feet (for no one, you know, wears shoes in the water, except horrid old bathing-women, who are afraid of the water-babies pinching their horny toes. And Tom stood staring at them; for he could not understand what it was all about.

"And who are you, you little darlin?" she said.

"Oh, that is the new baby!" they all cried, pulling their thumbs out of their mouths; "and he never had any mother," and they all put their thumbs back again, for they did not wish to lose any time.

"Then I will be his mother, and he shall have the very best place; so get out all of you, this moment."

And she took up two great armfuls of babies—nine hundred under one arm, and thirteen hundred under the other—and threw them away, right and left, into the water. But they minded it no more than the naughty boys in Struwelpeter minded when St. Nicholas dipped them in his inkstand; and did not even take their thumbs out of their mouths, but came paddling and wriggling back to her like so many tadpoles, till you could see nothing of her from head to foot for the swarm of little babies.

But she took Tom in her arms, and laid him in the softest place of all, and kissed him, and patted him, and talked to him, tenderly and low, such things as he had never heard before in his life; and Tom looked up into her eyes, and loved her, and loved, till he fell fast asleep from pure love.

And when he woke, she was telling the children a story. And what story did she tell them? One story she told them, which begins every Christmas Eve, and yet never ends at all for ever and ever; and, as she went on, the children took their thumbs out of their mouths, and listened quite seriously, but not sadly at all, for she never told them anything sad; and Tom listened too, and never grew tired of listening. And he listened so long that he fell asleep again, and, when he woke, the lady was nursing him still.

"Now," said the Fairy to Tom, "will you be a good boy for my sake, and torment no more sea-beasts, till I come back?"

"And you will cuddle me again?" said poor little Tom.

"Of course I will, you little duck. I should like to take you with me, and cuddle you all the way, only I must not;" and away she went.

So Tom really tried to be a good boy, and tormented no sea-beasts after that, as long as he lived; and he is quite alive, I assure you, still.

Oh, how good little boys ought to be, who have kind pussy mammas to cuddle them and tell them stories, and how afraid they ought to be of growing naughty, and bringing tears into their mammas' pretty eyes!

(To be continued.)

GEMS OF THOUGHT.

All great men are in some degree inspired.

In matters not how the head lies if the heart is right.

All true friendship soothes the heart, clarifies the mind, and heightens the soul.

Tis'nt not the whiteness of his turban who bought the soap on credit.—*Turkish Proverb.*

Those days are lost in which we do no good; those worse than lost in which we do evil.

In general those parents have most reverence who most deserve it, for he that lives well cannot be despised.

The noblest talents rust in indolence; and the most moderate, by industry, may be astonishly improved.

We may silently observe things we need not speak of; in this we learn many a profitable lesson without the cost of imprudence.

A Man who is not able to make a bow to his own conscience every morning, is hardly in a condition to respectably salute the world at any other time of the day.

The man who can vary his pursuits, and has time for everything—for himself, for his wife, for his children, for his friends—alone understands what it is to live.

True is painted with a lock before, and bald behind, signifying thereby that we must take time (as we say) by the forelock, for when it is once passed there is no recalling it.

How simple it would be if a man's word were as good as his bond; if we never had to weigh it, and sift it, and see one man and another, and inquire about it, and find out whether it was true or not! If men's statements could be relied upon, and men could trust each other, what an impetus would be given to the world's progress.