

THE LITTLE FOLK.

BO-PEEP'S DREAM.

Bo-Peep's gone to Dreamtown,
Land of Lullabies,
Where her lambs are straying,
In a meadow playing,
Heedless of her cries.

After them a giant,
With a gleaming blade,
Creeps with footsteps wary,
But a friendly fairy
Lends her magic aid.

Frightened woolly lambkins
Homeward trot once more;
There Bo-peep will find them,
Stumpy tails behind them,
When her journey's o'er.

Mabel A. Clinton.

THE NARROW PATH.

BY S. B. THORNTON.

"Oh, mamma!" cried little Elsie Donnithorn, running in from school hot and breathless. "Just think, I ran all the way home right in that little narrow path: I never touched the grass at all, and I never stopped once. Annie Marshal said that was the only way to do; that you had to keep on with out stopping."

Mrs. Donnithorn brushed the damp hair from her little daughter's forehead, and said, kissing her:

"And what does that remind you of, my darling; can you think?"

The little girl wrinkled up her white brows and looked anxiously at her mother.

"What did we read last Sunday, Elsie? Think well."

"Oh! I know! I wonder I didn't know right away; it was about the narrow path that leads to heaven, and the broad road that so many take. Oh, mamma, isn't that it?"

"Yes, dear, and I want my little girl to take that path for life as she takes this one for play. Now run and get dressed in a clean frock."

Mrs. Donnithorn was a widow, and Elsie was her only child. She was bright and affectionate, but her mother longed to make her a Christian child, and tried to show her of how little importance was all else.

"Mamma," said Elsie, as they sat at tea, "to-day at school Tim Dixon got black marks for everything; all the girls just d'apise him—he's so stupid he never knows anything, and when he misses he gets so red, and stammers awfully; and he's so common, we just wish he wasn't in our room."

"Maybe he can't help it, dear."

"But, mamma, he's so silly; he can't learn a thing; and then he's got red hair, and his clothes are all ragged! Why, Mamie Robbins wouldn't sit by him at all to-day; she said at recess she was 'fraid she'd catch something."

Mrs. Donnithorn repressed a smile.

"But he may be very poor, Elsie."

"Yes, he is; he never has any pie for lunch, nor doughnuts—just bread, and sometimes old fat meat or cheese."

"Well, Elsie, suppose you try giving him some of your cookies to-morrow."

"Oh, mamma, I couldn't! He's so hateful to us girls: he teases us as mean—as mean—we all hate him."

"Poor little Ismaelite, said Mrs. Donnithorn, softly. Then she turned to the little girl who sat finishing her last morsel of bread and jam.

"Do you think if you had no kind mother and no nice clothes, Elsie, that you would feel like being bright and pleasant, and working hard for lessons? Now will you promise me, before we have our prayers to-night, to be as kind as you know how to Tim, and try to help him? Will my little daughter promise me this?"

For a moment Elsie was silent; then she impulsively threw her arms about her mother's neck.

"Yes, I will, mamma, and I'll tell Mamie, too; we are chums, you know, and its my work to say what let's."

The next morning Elsie's mother prepared her an unusually tempting luncheon, and the little girl went off in great glee. She was a general favorite at school, and sullen Tim could not resist her smile nor the doughnuts she held out to him. He took them in his grimy hands, and even grinned by way of thanks.

Elsie went home delighted with her success, and soon it became an understood thing that Tim shared her luncheon, and that he generally edged up close to her at recess, but he did not answer any of her shy questions.

It was nearing Easter, and the children's guild which their kind teacher and organized was to present flowers for the chancel of the little church.

Elsie's particular care now was a beautiful potted rose. The plant was covered with buds, and Elsie carefully watered it every day. Her anxiety for it to be covered with blossoms for Easter grew in intensity as the time went on. The Friday before Easter when Elsie came home from school, her mother called her, and she ran to her room where, on a table, stood her rose, a mass of pale pink color. Nearly every bud was out. Elsie uttered a cry of joy.

"Oh, mamma! isn't it lovely?"

"Very lovely, dear. To-morrow we will send it to the church, and Sunday, when we go to celebrate our dear Lord's Resurrection we will see it with all the others."

"Oh, mamma, it will be the very prettiest of all!" She sat down before it, lost in admiration, her lunch basket and books falling to the floor.

Her mother picked them up, saying, in surprise, "Why, how is this Elsie? You did not eat your lunch."

"Yes, I did, mamma; but Tim wasn't there, and I always give him half. He didn't send any word, either. I guess he's sick."

"We will try and find out," said Mrs. Donnithorn. "We must keep in the narrow path at this joyful season, little daughter."

Elsie nodded gravely, but her eyes were fixed upon her beloved rose. The next day it was to be sent to her teacher, where all the offerings of the children's guild were to be received, and then sent, with the different names attached, to the church. Elsie gave a fond look at her beautiful rose before it was taken away.

It was late that evening when the bell rang, and a visitor was announced who proved to be Elsie's teacher, Miss Annie. Her face wore a troubled, anxious look. Mrs. Donnithorn greeted her affectionately.

"Elsie is in bed; she is all anxiety for to-morrow to come," she said smiling.

"And I am the bearer of ill news. I am greatly worried over what has happened," she explained that the flowers had all been placed in line to be lifted into her carriage and conveyed to the church by Miss Annie herself. It was nearly dark, and at a moment when the coachman's back was turned a clever thief had made off with one of the pots, which proved to be Elsie's rose.

"I know how much the child cared for it," said Miss Annie, "and I thought it best to come at once to tell you. I will replace it, if it is possible now."

"Oh, no!" said Mrs. Donnithorn. "Elsie is a reasonable child, and will, I think, take the disappointment bravely. But I will not tell her to-night."

It was early the next morning, and Mrs. Donnithorn had just entered the dining room, when she heard the bell ring, and, glancing from the window, saw a small boy standing on the step. A moment later she heard Jane urging him to "be after wiping yer feet afore goin' in ter the quality." And then the door opened, and a little ragged figure stood on the threshold. He was thin, and his face was pale under the freckles. His hair was red, and he fumbled his hat awkwardly.

Mrs. Donnithorn spoke kindly. "What can I do for you, my boy?"

"The big tears came into his eyes, and he brushed them away with the back of his hand. "I want to see Elsie; she gives me cookies and pie. I'm Tim, meebby you know."

"Yes, yes—I'm glad to see you, Tim. Elsie is upstairs."

"I—I wouldn't er took it," he broke in, desperately, "if I'd er knowed it was hern; I didn't though; I didn't till I got home. It was fer my little sister, ma'am; she's er dyin', an' she hankered after er rose—'jus' er smell, Tim," she said; "jus' er rose to look at, the kind mother used to have." You see, ma'am, there's nobody but father now; an' he's awfully rough. So I says, 'Sis,' says I, 'I'll get you one,' an' I out an' hooked it; an' when I got home her name was on it, an' she's been good to me, an' I came to tell you. I didn't bring it back cause Sis, she's jus' star'n at it so happy like, I couldn't touch it; but I've come to own up, an' when Sis's dead"—He broke off, sobbing.

Elsie had crept into the room and heard it all. She ran to her mother, crying, too.

But Tim's little sister did not die. Mrs. Donnithorn went that afternoon and carried her away from the dingy room which was their home. In the warm bright ward of the hospital grew well and strong again. Nor did Mrs. Donnithorn's kind care end there. She gained the consent of the drunken father for his children to be sent to a good home in the country, and there the little sister grew fat and rosy among the flowers she loved, and Tim did his chores well, and the colour came into his pale face.

But little Elsie is trying still to keep in that narrow path, and she finds it easier if she helps along the way those who are less fortunate and who stumble as they go.