

Cottie and Frankie were standing near an old shed, and had time only to seek safety upon the beams. They clambered up by the posts to the loft which was composed of rickety boards, and contained a few bundles of straw. The novelty relieved their sudden alarm, and they began to amuse themselves by exploring the corners and crevices of their new quarters. A pile of sawdust proved an endless source of attraction. They made gardens, erected forts, built whole cities, never dreaming of their companions, of their home, or their dinner. Frankie was so pleased and happy that he went quietly to sleep, his little curly head rolling over the apple-trees in his garden, and his feet demolishing Cottie's fort.

The silence was too much for Cottie. She longed for his merry chatter. She felt sad and lonely, and burst into tears. Looking down through the boards she saw the water still there. She could see no street at all. Not a voice or a hush was heard.

"Oh! Frankie, Frankie, wake up. I'm going home. Come. Come. We must go home."

But Frankie was too happy in his dreams to heed his sister's voice. She wept louder and louder, calling to him again and again.

"I'm going home now, Frankie. It's dinner time. Frankie! Frankie!"

When Frankie did wake up, he was so refreshed by his dreams and his sleep that he firmly objected to going home.

"Me play more, sissy, me play more."

"Oh! no, Frankie; it *is* dinner time. We *must* go. Oh! we must go," said Cottie bitterly, bursting into tears again.

"Oh go, bring dinny here. Me play more. Me eat dinny here. Good sissy, go."

Cottie remembered the bread in their pockets, and thinking that she could more easily induce her little brother afterwards, she produced it and sat down beside him. The bread disappeared as it does among children who do not see too much of it, and who seldom know the relish of butter or preserves. But Frankie was slow to give up his gardens, and the afternoon was wearing into evening when Cottie tried to clamber down. The fearful reality of their condition flashed an instantaneous terror to her young heart.

They were alone. They were far from their homes and their mother. They were surrounded as far as her little eyes could see by water. There was no sign of life but their own misery.

She tried to console herself by comforting her brother, who now clung about her neck weeping bitterly, calling on his mother, and beseeching his sister to take him home. The night stole on, and they wept themselves to sleep; no birds twittering and bringing leaves to cover their little limbs from the dewy air;—no blue sky or twinkling stars to tell them of the angels' watchful care;—only darkness and gloom.

The Convent bells next morning roused the two sleeping children.

"Cottie! me hear a noise."

"Yes. Mothing lighting the fire" replied Cottie only half-awake.

"Oh! yes. Mother! mother! breakfast soon mother? me want breakfast now" said Frankie, rousing himself, and crawling over to his sister.

"Oh! Frankie! don't bother me. I want to sleep more. Lie down a little longer; there's a good child."

But Frankie was bright as the morning sun, and would have no more sleep. Cottie rubbed her eyes wide open, and her strange surroundings made the events of the previous day rush in upon her little soul. Many a brave effort did she make to cheer herself.

Many were the games she started for her brother when he clamoured for his breakfast; but as it grew to clamouring for dinner, and eventually for supper, her little heart could stand out no longer. She could do nothing now,—nothing but weep bitterly, and call as loudly as her failing courage enabled her on something, some one, anything but the awful silence, and loneliness and hunger.

The angels looked down from the twinkling stars, as they have looked down for ages, and closed once more the sad and weary eyes in sleep.

\* \* \* \* \*

Her day's work over Mrs. Mearns expended part of her well-earned wages, and started for her humble home.

"Now," she said, "we'll have to-morrow together, my children and myself. Thank the Good God for the Sundays;" and the gladness at her heart prevented her from attending to remarks about "flood," "water still rising" which were abroad in the evening air.

But, lo! no sooner had she turned into the long street in which she lived than the water stopped her way. The people were crowding in excitement and looking on with saddened faces, whilst rafts of every imaginable contrivance were being pushed about.

"Oh! Sir!" she said, turning to a kindly-faced old gentleman, "this is terrible. What shall I do? My two children are all alone in my house. What shall I do? What shall I do?"

The old gentleman looked at the woman and then across the water.

"It can't last long, my woman. I think it's falling now. I expect every minute the whole thing will go away as fast as it came."

"I'll take you home, missus" cried a lad on a raft close by.

The woman's heart bounded for joy. No fear of the dangerous craft troubled her. Her children alone filled her mind. If she only could know they were safe, could be with them to protect them, could have them once more in her arms.

"For five dollars," added the lad with a knowing look, and keeping his raft at a safe distance.

"Five dollars!" exclaimed the old gentleman, "you should be ashamed of yourself, sir," and turning towards the woman he advised her to wait an hour or two, the neighbours would be looking after her children, and the water *must* go soon.

An hour or two! made up of minutes like these! Then her children may be drowned! *Now* they may be drowning! The thought maddened her.

Five dollars! it seemed a fortune. She knew not how much it was. She had never possessed it; yet she did not feel it would be too much if she had had it to give.

"I cannot give you five dollars, but I'll give you what I can" said she, holding out her bread. "Here's our supper and to-morrow's dinner."

"Phew" whistled the lad. "I'm not hungry."

"Take me to my children, my poor lonely drowning children, and here's ten cents more,—all I have in the world."

"I'm too busy, missus. There's a band of young ladies with their sweethearts who want a paddle round for a dollar apiece, I've no doubt" said he, poling himself in the direction of the party. "I must make hay when the sun shines. The water may go at any moment and leave me high and dry for my good intentions."

"For Heaven's sake take me with you" cried the