

Children's Department.

THE OLD NURSE.

STORY FOR THE YOUNG FOLKS.

CHAPTER V.

After luncheon Mrs. Arden joined the walking party, who were to repair to the church first, to finish the drawing. Mrs. Forester had a bad cold, and determined to stay in the house, encouraged in her good resolution, as Alice averred, by the arrival of a new packet of books from from the Reading Society.

"You are going with us surely, Ann," said Henry as he stood at the open door, swinging Alice's drawing board between his fingers; "you will walk with us to-day, will you not?—it is the last day."

"The last day!"—the last day of anything; but especially of companionship with a dear friend, when partings are long and meetings uncertain;—what a melancholy sound it has, and how are its moments counted as they fleet too quickly by!

"The lights are so beautiful, dear Ann," whispered Alice, "I must first finish my drawing, and then I shall go directly to old Nurse; do come with us! you know she bade you not come before two o'clock, and it has but just struck."

Ann almost hesitated; but she turned hastily away, and saying in rather a low voice,—"I think I had better go to Nurse Amy first; you see I have got my drawing things, and I can join you very soon if she is pretty well,"—walked quickly down the approach in the direction of the village.

The sun shone brightly into the old church. Its rich light came pouring into the chancel through the half-opened door; and again shed gorgeous hues from the painted glass of the narrow window on the south side, upon Sir Mowbray's white marble. Alice placed herself exactly where she had begun her sketch, while Henry, with occasional helps and remarks from his mother, furnished the conversation. He described his new house in glowing colors,—the house, the garden, the prospect, and the little church, with its taper spire and peaceful churchyard. Then he criticised Alice's sketch, begging for a line here and a shadow there, till Alice was led into making it a much more finished picture than she had intended.

Just then the church clock struck five. Alice started up. "O aunt Emma," she exclaimed, "we must go! I had not an idea how late it was. Ann will say I had quite forgotten old Nurse."

"This is the prettiest picture I have ever seen of yours, Alice," said Mr. Arden as she examined the drawing; "the colours are so well put in; and that kneeling figure in front is beautiful,—is it not, Henry?"

"Henry warmly acquiesced; and Alice, who had by this time put up her drawing things, took the board from her aunt and left the church.

The party had not reached the second field from the churchyard when they perceived a girl running towards them in breathless haste. Alice stood still involuntarily, and her very heart felt as if it paused in its rapid beatings, when she recognized in the messenger Nurse Amy's Lucy!

"Oh, Miss Alice!" the girl exclaimed in broken accents before she reached the party, "run, run to the cottage, or you will be too late; Nurse Amy is dying!"

Poor Alice gave one shriek, and then, flinging her drawing things upon the ground, flew, rather than ran, along the path that led to the village. One all-engrossing idea seemed to exclude all others from her mind—if she could but reach her nurse in time to implore her forgiveness for every past neglect, to receive her parting blessing, she might yet be happy! Already she had reached the common, and she did not slacken her speed till she attained the wicket of the little garden. There stood the



VILLAGE SCENE.

cottage, looking as peaceful as ever, with its wreaths of woodbine overhanging the porch; the bedroom window was flung wide open, and the white curtain thrown over it, as if to admit every breath of air the sultry summer's evening could afford; and Alice, as she clung to the pillar of the porch for support, heard the sound of reading within. It was Mr. Hayter; who in a low and solemn voice resumed, (after what appeared to the breathless listener a long pause,) the commendatory prayer of our Church.

"And teach us who survive," he said, with an emphasis on the word, "in this and other daily spectacles of mortality, to see how frail and uncertain our own condition is; and so to number our days, that we may seriously apply our hearts to that holy and heavenly wisdom whilst we live here, which may in the end bring us to life everlasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ thine only Son, our Lord. Amen."

When the echo of the last word died away, Alice pressed forward. Mr. Hayter met her at the entrance.

"My dear Miss Alice," he said, kindly pressing the small hand which shook like an aspen leaf within his own, "are you prepared for what you may see in the other room? 'The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away,'—your old nurse is dead."

Alice broke from him at the last word, and springing to the entrance of the inner room, paused for a single instant to contemplate the scene, and then falling on her knees by the bedside, she buried her face in the bedclothes, and sobbed in the bitterness of her heart.

There, on the simple cottage bed, lay the mortal remnant of Alice's beloved nurse; her marble-like countenance and closed eyes reposing in the calm beauty of death. Alas! the cold hand that Alice covered with tears and kisses would never return the fond pressure of her again; the pale lips would never again utter those words of tenderness and consolation to her beloved foster-child, with which Nurse Amy was ever ready to soothe her transient sorrows. Oh, what would not Alice have given for one of those past interviews to come again! and with what agony of heart did she feel that she could never again repair the consequences of her procrastination!

Oh you who consider it a light thing—a venial offence—to delay till to-morrow what should be done to-day; to neglect the present opportunity of doing good;

to put off the kind word or the charitable deed to "a more convenient season;"—availing regrets, nor delay amendment till some equally severe lesson comes to sadden your whole after life, and ring in your shuddering ear the never-ceasing knell, "Too late! TOO LATE!"

In vain Ann rose from her knees to bestow the tenderest caresses on her sister, and repeat over and over again the fervent blessings Nurse Amy had left for her.—In vain Mr. Hayter sought to attract her attention to the large Bible on a table beside the bed, in the fly-leaf of which Nurse Amy had made a last effort to write with a tremulous hand, "For my dear child, Alice Forester, with Nurse Amy's blessing; Ecclesiastes xii. ver. 1 to 7." Alice's grief was as that of one who refuseth to be comforted; nor did her sobs cease till, exhausted by the violence of her own suffering, she sunk into a sort of torpor, and allowed Ann to lead her home in silence.

(To be continued.)

A VILLAGE SCENE.

Our engraving presents a characteristic village scene in Madagascar, slave girls coming to the well for water. For although the British Government has done so much to abolish slavery in many parts of the world, yet there are some relics of it yet to be found. In this place the well was twenty feet deep, sunk through the sand which was kept up by boards at the sides. The water was drawn up in a large bullock's horn, fastened to the end of a string made of bark and let down by the hand to the water. Numbers of slave girls come every morning with long bamboo canes for water. These canes were six or eight feet long, and the partitions, or the joints inside being broken, formed cylinders, three or four inches wide, in which the water was conveyed from the well to the adjacent houses.

The letter written by Miss Lawrence from Madagascar, which appeared recently in the DOMINION CHURCHMAN, was so interesting as far as regards the Church and the Schools there, that we felt sure our young readers would be delighted to learn any particulars about the domestic history and habits of this most interesting people, living as they do in the large and fertile island of Madagascar.

THE LOVE OF JESUS.

My mother loves me dearly,  
My mother loves me well,  
But Jesus loves me better  
Than ever I can tell.

My father gives me food and clothes,  
And many a loving kiss,  
But Jesus Christ, my SAVIOUR,  
He loves me more than this.

With brothers dear, and sisters,  
And many a friend I'm blest,  
And they love me always fondly,  
But Jesus loves me best.

He came on earth to save me,  
He takes me for His lamb;  
And he is always watching  
Around me where I am.

His love gives all I have on earth,  
His love gives all I see;  
But most of all, in His sweet love,  
He gave Himself for me.

So when, both night and morning,  
I pray to God in Heaven,  
And thank Him for the blessings  
That He to me has given,

I'll say, "For those I bless Thee,  
Lord Jesus, God above;  
But, most of all, I thank Thee,  
Lord Jesus, for Thy love."

GIVING IN CHRIST.

The wise may bring their learning,  
The rich may bring their wealth,  
And some may bring their greatness,  
And some bring strength and health.  
We, too, would bring our treasures  
To offer to the King;  
We have no wealth or learning—  
What shall we children bring?

We'll bring Him hearts that love Him;  
We'll bring Him thankful praise,  
And young souls meekly starving  
To walk in holy ways.  
And these shall be the treasures  
We offer to the King;  
And these are gifts that even  
The poorest child may bring.

We'll bring the little duties  
We have to do each day  
We'll try our best to please Him  
At home, at school, at play.  
And better are these treasures  
To offer to our King,  
Than richest gifts without them  
Yet these a child may bring.