

ment failed long ago ; I mean, Nancy, that there is no longer any money with which to support the old house."

"Then it is no use that the Thankful Heart was given, and it is all lost, and I am sorrier than ever."

"And yet, I would say, not lost, replied the rector, pacing the courtyard. "The spirit of the gift is more than the gift itself, my little maid, and that can never be lost, having passed once for all beyond us and our marring."

"But what is it?" said Miss Nancy, trying to suspend her sobs.

"I mean the deep thought of the heart, with which the gift was given, Nancy."

"I think I begin to know it," said Miss Nancy, "only I cannot say it. It means that nothing could ever take away that was given once."

And the rector bent his head, and said, "In token of the Thankful Heart. Amen."

He sat down on one of the benches under the lattices, and Miss Nancy sat beside him, and wiped her eyes, with a vague sense, however little understood, of a quiet consolation. The water still rippled in the basin, and the larks sang above the buttercup meadow, but it seemed with another note, and there was a deeper rest in the peace of the Thankful Heart.

"Once upon a time, Nancy," said the rector, "there was a man, an old man, who had almost come to the end of his days. He sat at his open window on a midsummer evening,—yes, it might have been such an evening as this. His work lay on the bench before him, but his tools were still, for he was dreaming ; and he saw, as if they had been pictures, scenes that had been long ago.

"He saw a picture in the forest, the heart of a forest, where the deer and the squirrels lived, and it was cool, and green, and still. There stood two boys, about the same age, but alike in nothing else, for one was the young squire, and the other was a peasant boy, bareheaded, barefooted, and ragged. He stood looking down, with his hands behind his back, and the sunshine fell between the trees on both alike, — on the young squire and on the ragged peasant boy.

"'But show me what you are doing' said the young squire.

"'I was cutting,' said the boy, in a low voice.

"'Yes, I saw, but show it to me.'

"The boy drew his hands from behind his back, slowly and unwillingly, and showed the piece of wood they held.