

Rain on the Roof.

BY COATES KINNEY.

WHEN the humid shadows hover
Over all the starry spheres,
And the melancholy darkness
Gently weeps in rainy tears,
What a bliss to press the pillow
Of a cottage-chamber bed,
And lie listening to the patter
Of the soft rain overhead!

Every tinkle on the shingles
Has an echo in the heart,
And a thousand dreamy fancies
Into busy being start,
And a thousand recollections
Weave their air threads into wool,
As I listen to the patter
Of the rain upon the roof.

Now in memory comes my mother,
As she used in years ago
To regard the darling dreamers
Ere she left them till the dawn:
O! I feel her fond look on me
As I list to this refrain
Which is played upon the shingles
By the patter of the rain.

Then my little seraph-sister,
With the wings and waving hair,
And her star-eyed cherub brother—
A serene angelic pair—
Glide around my wakeful pillow,
With their praise or mild reproof,
As I listen to the murmur
Of the soft rain on the roof.

And another comes, to thrill me
With her eyes' delicious blue;
And I mind not, musing on her,
That her heart was all untrue:
I remember but to love her
With a passion kin to pain,
And my heart's quick pulses quiver
To the patter of the rain.

Art hath naught of tone or cadence
That can work with such a spell
In the soul's mysterious fountains,
Whence the tears of rapture well,
As the melody of Nature,
That subdued, subduing strain
Which is played upon the shingles
By the patter of the rain.

THE STORY OF A WAVELET.

BY E. L.

Yes, I am very old! How old I cannot say exactly, but five or six thousand years at the very least. I have seen a great deal, too, as the whole of my existence has been spent in travelling from place to place. Far up in the heavens I have played with the lightning, and laughed with the thunder; deep down in the earth I have revelled amid the wonders that lie hidden beneath its wrinkled surface. I have lain like a crest on the brow of a hoary mountain, I have travelled over swift rivers, dashed down foaming cataracts, and floated on the bosom of the ocean. But you would like to know my history, so I must go back to the beginning.

My earliest recollections are of finding myself playing with my brothers and sisters, on the bosom of our dear old mother ocean. I loved to watch the white clouds flit across the blue sky, sometimes hiding the face of the sun, who seemed to be all the time beckoning us upward. At last I yielded to his powerful influence, and instead of a careless wavelet became a small invisible mass of vapor so light that the mere weight of the atmosphere forced me upward. I felt very sorry at the thought of leaving my dear old mother, but the hope of becoming a cloudlet buoyed me up, and I joined a party of spirits similar to myself and off we dashed at lightning speed, without having much idea of where we were going. At last we reached

a region which to us who were unaccustomed to the cold climate of the north seemed very chilly. We huddled close together to keep ourselves warm, and then to our great delight we found ourselves assuming the very form of the cloud which we had so admired. In this form we floated about for some days, amusing ourselves with some simple electric experiments, and watching what was going on below us.

One day, however, we drifted into an exceedingly cold region. I learned afterwards that it was in the neighborhood of some high mountains where the air is always cold. Well, the queerest thing happened. For a while we huddled close together resolved to keep warm, but it would not do. We grew colder and colder, till at last we could bear it no longer, and letting go of hands we all tumbled headlong to the earth beneath.

I fell on a housetop, and went rolling over the eaves right into the hands of a rosy-checked little girl who was standing in the doorway catching rain-drops. How she laughed as I trickled through her fingers and fell on the hard earth below. I daresay if she had known that I had come all the way from the ocean she would have looked upon me with more respect.

Well, after stopping to flirt with a rosebud, and kissing two or three meek-eyed daisies that grew in the little girl's garden, I sank gently down into the ground; here I met some of my companions, and together we pursued our way through the heart of the earth. It was not very pleasant down there in the dark, but we passed some curious and wonderful things on our way. Treasure of gold and silver lay hidden in our path, but we swept by them in scorn. That which man values most is of small account to us. At length, at the foot of a great hill, we emerged together with quite a company of our old friends who had thought fit to join us, into the broad glare of sunlight. We could not help laughing aloud at finding ourselves once more in the open air.

"Mamma," said a little girl to her mother, as they stood on the bank watching us, "isn't the brook pretty? Where is it going?"

"To the ocean, my child," was the answer. "Yes, it is very beautiful."

We laughed louder than ever when we heard that. To think that we were on our way to the ocean, that after all our ramblings we should see our dear old mother once more. How fast we dashed along, leaping from stone to stone, whirling round in little bits of eddies, and turning somersaults over every sandbank, till at last we found ourselves in a sober old lake all shut in by hills.

But we had no intention of staying here. We pursued our way, though more slowly, across it, then by a large stream we entered one still larger, and at last leaped headlong down a foaming cataract right into the bosom of a mighty river. Then we floated along gently, past pleasant farms and orchards, past picturesque villages and beneath lofty bridges, till we heard afar off the roar of the great sea coming out to meet us. What a meeting it was, when the big ocean and the swiftly flowing river rushed into each other's arms! How the waters foamed and surged to and fro in their delirious joy! How thankful we wavelets were to rest once more upon the bosom of our mother ocean, while we told her of all the strange and beautiful things that we had seen in our wanderings.

Since then I have made a great many voyages across the heavens, and a corresponding number of journeys through the earth and over the land. Once I visited a remarkably cold climate, and, much to my own disgust, was frozen stiff while still high up in the air. With a view to getting awed out,

I floated gently down and found myself lying flat on the sidewalk of a very dirty town. I heard several people admiring me as I lay there sparkling in the sunlight, and was just beginning to feel a little warmer, when a boy made a snowball of me and threw me at a little girl who was crossing the street. Unfortunately for myself, I happened to fall right in the centre of a carriage way, and was almost trodden to death by the feet of the horses. However, when spring came, I managed to make my way to a tiny stream and thence back to my old ocean home.

On another occasion, a similar calamity befell me while high up in the air, but instead of falling in a town, I chanced to alight on the top of a very high mountain, a little above snow line. I do not know how long I lay there, but at the very least calculation it must have been several hundred years. That was the most uncomfortable period of my existence. At length growing weary of this monotonous life, a great host of us who had been almost crushed to death by the mass of snow falling on us year after year from above, began—very slowly, indeed, but none the less surely—to force our way down the mountain side. As we moved along at a rate of a few inches in a year we became wedged together in a solid mass, and thus in irresistible strength and grandeur, we crept silently toward the beautiful valley below.

I can scarcely tell how it happened, but one day there was an awful sound louder than thunder, and then all at once I felt myself being precipitated violently downward. When I came to my senses again, the trees and vineyards of the pretty village on which I had looked for so many years, were all buried beneath a great mass of ice and snow. Yes, it was a terrible thing to do, but you see I couldn't well help it. I had no idea when I began the descent of the mountain, that I should ever participate in such a terrible destructive work as this. So take care, my dear children, never to enter the downward path. You cannot possibly tell in what it will end.

Well, I think I have given you a fair idea of the queer wandering sort of life I live. But if any of you would like to know more about it, just come down to the seashore, where you'll find me always ready to tell the whole story. Only be careful to bring with you Fine-ear of the fairy-tale to act as interpreter, otherwise you will not be able to understand a word I say.

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IT IS SO HARD.

THINGS often seem hard at first—so hard that it is almost useless to attempt them—but they grow easier when I try to do them. At a certain season of the year the salmon fill our rivers, swimming up against the stream. They meet waterfalls in their path, some of them so high that it seems impossible they could pass them; but they do their best, and a wonderful best it is. I once stood near a waterfall in the north of Scotland watching the salmon leap. They were in the stream that day by hundreds. How they did jump—five feet, six feet, seven feet, I suppose—into the air, trying to get up that waterfall! They often missed, but they only tried again and again till they did succeed. Salmon have been known to take leaps of twelve feet; and it is said that by pausing in the fall itself for a moment, as some of the stronger fish can do, and jumping again, they have passed falls which have a clear descent of sixteen feet. If we go straight up to something difficult which meets us in the path of duty and try our very best, it is wonderful what strength God gives us for the occasion, and how difficulties vanish which seemed likely to block up our way.