

"Thou art a strange child. But I will ask our mother what we can do to see him."

Esther thanked her sister—but during the night she scarcely slept. Should she see that great prophet whom the common people believed to be Messiah? And was it likely, if she did, that he would notice her?

As the morning began to dawn, she fell asleep. She was awakened by her sister, who said, "It is time to rise, if thou wouldst go to the house of Jonathan."

She sprang from her couch, and robed herself hastily. She could scarcely taste the morning meal, and soon set out with her sister and mother. On the way they were joined by Rachel and her mother, who led between them the little blind lad.

There was already a crowd gathering about the house, but a man of the village passed in before them with his demoniac son, from whom the throng shrank somewhat back, and the eager women with the blind boy pressed close behind until they came into an inner room where were Jesus and his disciples. They stood in his very presence; and Esther felt her whole heart go out to him in unutterable love, as she looked on his face, so full of kingly majesty yet so overflowing with infinite love and compassion.

He fixed his eyes on the demoniac, who began now to be fearfully convulsed, foaming at the mouth and gnashing his teeth.

"Thou unclean spirit, come out of him!" said the Master.

The young man fell to the floor like one dead, but Jesus taking him by the hand lifted him up,—living, rejoicing, a new being; for all his life long he had been tormented and distressed. The young man and his father drew back, and Simon stood before the Lord. He put his hand upon the eyes of the boy, and instantly he looked up with a new smile on his countenance, and after one long look at Jesus, turned to the group behind him, and catching his mother's hand he drew his own over her features to be sure he knew her, and his whole face dimpled with delight. But Esther could not look away from the great and wonderful Healer.

A young mother brought up her babe, flushed with fever and moaning with pain,—her tears choked her words as she offered it to his touch. He looked graciously on her: he laid his hand on the baby's head, and it opened its heavy eyes and looked about, joyous and wondering, as though just roused from sleep to consciousness; it saw its mother's face of glad surprise, and smiled and sprang up in her arms, and caressed her in its pretty baby ways.