

"She is so quiet and dull," said Polly laughing; "she doesn't care a bit what people think of her, though she might get plenty to admire her if she chose."

"Don't talk in that way, please, dear; it makes me feel now as if it were all my fault for putting such thoughts into your head. But I must tell you my story."

"In church, I am afraid I did not take much heed of the prayers: I was chiefly looking about to see how people were dressed, and thinking of all sorts of things."

"At last, the sermon came, and this was the text: 'Consider the lilies of the field how they grow. They toil not neither do they spin, and yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.'

"Then I began to listen, for the rector told us such beautiful things about the lilies being emblems of purity and holiness, and he said that each of us factory girls should be like a lily and keep herself unspotted from the world. I wish I could repeat to you all that he said, for his words have kept ringing in my ears ever since."

"When we came out of church, my mind was quite full of what I had heard; and as I wanted to think about it, I took the path home round the allotment gardens by myself. It was such a lovely afternoon, so fine and warm, that I was tempted to go into the hayfield beyond, and as I sat down there to rest I fell asleep."

"Then there came to me a strange and wonderful dream; it seemed like a message from Heaven."

"It was the early morning, and I was standing with a great number of people on a mountain side. We were all starting for a long journey to a far country, and there seemed to be many guides going about from one to the other to show us the way."

"One path there was which went straight up the mountain, — a steep, rugged foot-way, through a dark forest of pine-trees, with prickly bushes and rough stones, while far up above, almost out of sight, were great peaks of cold, blinding white snow. This was one road; but the other looked far pleasanter: it led down into a beautiful valley where there were green meadows and lovely flowers, and all seemed bright and sunny. Between the two roads there was a little stream rippling along, so narrow at the beginning that you could easily step over it; but as it went winding on, it grew wider and deeper."

"As I was standing there, uncertain which way to take, there came to me one of the guides, an old man poorly clothed. He said he was a messenger from the king of the far-off country which we wished to reach, sent to show us the way there. He pointed to the steep path up the mountain-side and said:

"This is the way; walk ye in it."

"But while he was still speaking to me, there came one in bright clothing, who laughed at the old man's words, and spoke in a soft flattering voice:

"Why should a young girl like you tear your feet and wear out your strength by going up that weary road? You would fall down and faint before you reach the mountain top. Come with me and I will show you the pleasant path amongst the fruits and flowers, fit