

Mr. Mostyn laughed outright.

'Not very much, I should say, as far as I know anything of them.'

'But I s'pose God could make an angel look like anything he liked, couldn't he?'

'Yes, child, I suppose so; but what connection is there between angels and policemen?'

'Oh, 'cos I thought God would send an angel to show me the way home to mother, same as he sent one to let Peter out of prison. But I s'pose it's all right. I s'pect he's an angel underneath.'

At that moment they stopped at an open door, and, with a cry of joy, Dot darted upstairs, Mr. Mostyn following more slowly. He stood for a moment or two at the door of the room she had entered, watching the scene within. Dot had thrown herself on her mother's bed, and for some time the sick woman was so fully occupied in caressing her recovered treasure that she did not see the stranger. It was, as he had guessed, his brother's child, who had come to him in the fog—that brother who, through a series of mistakes, had been wrongfully accused of a criminal offence, and who had only escaped prosecution for the sake of the family name. At length Mrs. Mostyn looked up, and—

'Wilfred!' she exclaimed in surprise.

'Yes,' he said, coming forward. 'Can you ever forgive me, Rachel? But, indeed, I had no idea you were in England. Why did Sydney leave you behind?'

'He had no choice,' she replied. 'We struggled on, living I hardly know how, for three years after Dot's birth, but at last he had to go, and he means us to join him soon.'

'If I had only known sooner!' groaned Mr. Mostyn. 'We hunted and advertised as soon as we found out our mistake, but—'

'You found it out?' she interrupted. 'Oh, thank God! thank God! Dot, darling, father can come home now. Look, here is a letter from him; it has just come. Oh, it is too much joy!' and she fell back exhausted on her pillow.

'How have you lived all this time?' inquired Mr. Mostyn, looking round the bare little room, after some further explanations.

His sister-in-law pointed with a smile to a sewing machine and a pile of unfinished shirts in the corner.

'You lived by that!' he cried. 'O God! forgive me! Why didn't I try harder to find you out? But I never dreamt you would have remained in London. And how could I, how could any one have believed Sydney guilty of such a deed?'

'I've had such a lot of a-ventures this morning, Dulcibella dear,' remarked Dot in confidence to a rather dilapidated specimen of the doll tribe. 'And such a queer angel brought me home. I s'pect he'd got wings and white clothes and things of that kind underneath, but outside he'd got black clothes with big, bright buttons on them, and such a 'culiar hat. Wasn't it funny? And only think! We're going to live in a nice house with Uncle Wilfred—that's another funny thing, I found an uncle this morning—and fathers' coming home, and mother's getting well, and such a lot of nice things are going to happen. You shall have a new dress, too, my dear, mother says so, though Uncle Wilfred laughs and says I'd better have a new doll, and not that d'lapped old thing. Fancy calling you a d'lapped old thing, my dear, dear, darling Dulcibella! Yes, mother, dear, in a louder tone, I'm just coming, only I wanted to tell Dulcibella quietly about everything, 'cos she mustn't be startled or 'cited, you know.'

## Myrtilla's Spinning Wheel.

(By Fanny M. Pierce.)

She sat on the cliff gazing dreamily across the blue water to the little rocky island upon which the waves broke in great masses of white foam. The little island always had a peculiar fascination for Myrtilla. When a little girl she had peopled it with fairies and genii and other wonderful folk, and had loved to imagine that in every crack and cranny of the rocks lurked a fairy palace or a captive princess. That was long ago, and Myrtilla was too old for fairies now, but from force of habit whenever she sat on the cliff her eyes would turn towards the island. She was thinking very deeply now, and her thoughts were not altogether happy. In fact there was a rebellious feeling struggling for mastery in her heart. Life was so dull, so common-place! Other girls had such happy, pleasant lives, so full of books, of school, and a thousand little pleasures that make girlhood sweet. Myrtilla's existence was one round of eternal monotony. To be sure, she had the island of the sea, and now that it was autumn the glowing maples and the gleaming hickories, whose leaves glittered so in the afternoon sunshine, but Myrtilla did not think of these things now. She only thought how glorious it would be to leave the humdrum little village in which she lived to go away to some good school, and then perhaps to college and to become wonderfully learned and good. How much might she not accomplish in the world then!

She could see herself dressed in a soft, white muslin dress, a bunch of roses in her hand and a shell comb in her hair (just like the one the young lady who had come to the village last summer had worn), stepping forward to receive her diploma at the hands of a distinguished professor. But this was only a dream, and at the thought of the lovely white dress Myrtilla looked with a sigh at the brown-checked gown which she wore, and smoothed back her already too smooth hair.

'I guess I'd better go home,' she thought. 'Grandmarm will be wondering where I am. Poor grandmarm! I wonder why she's so queer? I wish that we could be just like other people for once!'

She turned around and walked resolutely away from the cliff through the coarse grass into a little path which led through a grove of scrubby pine trees. The breeze blew her soft hair about her face and brought the color to brown cheeks, and altogether, in spite of her shabby dress, you would not have wished to see a prettier girl than Myrtilla.

At last she reached a tiny house that had once been white. There were no blinds on the house, but one might catch a glimpse of the sliding shutter inside the diamond-paned windows. There was a garden around the house with tiny gravelled paths and two long, oblong-shaped flower beds. In these beds were still standing a few belated pinks, some hardy marigolds, and one or two bright-colored dahlias and a great patch of rankly growing mignonette.

Myrtilla opened the door of the house with some hesitancy, for she knew that she had spent a long time on the cliffs and feared a reprimand from her grandmother. Her grandmother was known to the villagers as 'queer Marm Gray,' because she chose to live after her own fashion in this little house, away from every one. It was rumored that Marm Gray had money, but no one really knew.

When Myrtilla opened the door, Marm Gray turned around with a look of displeasure on her thin, white face. Somehow Marm Gray always gave one the impression of whiteness. She was very tall and thin

and as straight as an arrow. Her face was absolutely colorless, and her hair was as white as snow. She wore a short-waisted, old-fashioned gown of the style of many years ago.

'Myrtilla,' she said severely, 'I am surprised that you should have forgotten your spinning. I shall expect you to spin an extra amount to-morrow. You neglect your best friend when you neglect your spinning wheel.'

Another reason why Marm Gray was called queer by her neighbors was, that she chose to live as her mother had done before her. She would not tolerate so modern an invention as a stove in her house, but used her great fireplace instead. Several straight-backed chairs, a huge four-poster bed, and a small spinning wheel completed the furniture of the room which Myrtilla entered. How Myrtilla hated that spinning wheel! Day after day she was obliged to spin a certain amount of wool and to knit so much on the stout warm stockings which she and Marm Gray wore in the winter. She knew that hardly one of the other girls of the village had ever seen a spinning-wheel, and as for knitting blue-yarn stockings and wearing them, too, why, the other girls would open their eyes in amazement.

In this room also was Marm Gray's small library, consisting of the bible and the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' and a few polemical works in which every 's' was formed like an 'f.' Myrtilla, however, had a few treasures of her own; a book of fairy tales, a volume of Mrs. Browning's poems, and a copy of Tennyson's works. Once Myrtilla had tried to write a poem herself. She had endeavored to describe the cliffs and the island and the sunset on the water. She had sent her poor little effort to the county paper, and her verses had been very promptly returned to her. Many and bitter were the tears that she shed over that rejected manuscript.

Now Myrtilla was longing passionately to go away to school, where her love of learning and books would be gratified, but it did not seem as if this would ever be.

She made no reply to Marm Gray's reprimand, but moved noiselessly about the room preparing their early supper. After supper she washed the dishes and swept the floor and lit the candles. Then marm Gray read a chapter out of the old bible, and by eight o'clock the inhabitants of the dingy little house were fast asleep in bed.

It seemed to Myrtilla that she had only been asleep a moment when she awoke with a feeling as if a mountain was pressing down on her chest.

She could hardly get her breath. Did she smell smoke? She sprang from the bed and began to grope her way through the blinding smoke to the door. Where was the door? She could not find it. Now she stumbled against a chair, now against the wall. The smoke was choking her. At last, thank God! her hand touched the cold, slippery knob of the door, and she was out in the entry. A man was struggling up the narrow staircase. He seized Myrtilla in his arms and plunged down the stairs with her.

'Grandmarm,' she gasped, 'is she safe?'

'Yes,' the man answered hoarsely.

How good and sweet the out-door air seemed after the cruel scorching heat within!

'It must have been a spark from the fireplace,' Myrtilla heard one of the neighbors say as the man set her on the ground. She heard a sob behind her, and turning around she saw Marm Gray, her white hair streaming about her shoulders, wringing her hands in her agony. Myrtilla ran to her grandmother and wound her arms about her.

'There, there, grandmarm,' she said, 'don't mind it so much; please don't cry so.'