

The Inglenook.

For the Dominion Presbyterian.

"Little Elsie."

BY HELEN STIRLING.

"Mother, Elsie's so cross," said little Maisie Trent, one winter's day. "She cries all the time, and won't play with anything I give her. She's just awful cross."

"Poor little Elsie, is not well, to-day, Maisie, and we must be very gentle and kind with her," said Mrs. Trent, as she stooped to lift the fretting baby of two upon her knee, and kiss the burning cheek.

Maisie was just six years old and loved baby Elsie, dearly, but when she put her arms about her to day to show her how much she loved her, Elsie screamed and tugged her hair. Maisie laughed as she gently caught the hot little hands which were hurting her so, and said, with big tears of pain, in her eyes, "oh, oh baby, I does fink oose sick or you wouldn't doo 'at."

Baby grew worse, and in a few days the busy little hands lay still and white, and the brow which had been so hot was icy cold. Mother was ill and could not talk to little Maisie and papa was so still. She was very lonely and sad, and wandered about the house not knowing what to do.

That night when instead of mother, Aunt Margaret came to put the wee lassie to bed, she clambered upon her knee, and putting her two little arms tightly round her aunties neck sobbed "oh auntie, I want Elsie, so very, very much, will she never play with me any more never? why can't she speak or move auntie, what is it to be dead?"

Folding her arms about her tightly auntie said, "Listen, Maisie, once upon a time there lived away deep down in the beautiful brown earth a little red ant. She was a very busy little creature and made many friends. One day she was about to run off to her home with a little brown bundle she had found when she heard the sweetest little voice say, "please little ant, do not harm me, but let me lie in my soft little bed. I am a little pansy, and am shut up just now in this little brown house, but if you leave me quite still I know I shall be a beautiful pansy."

"To be sure I will," said the kind hearted little ant, "I will wrap you up so warmly, and take good care of you, little pansy. You need not fear, and the little red ant made a soft bed for the pansy seed, and watched over it carefully. Indeed she had one or two hard fights with other busy little ants who wished to run off with the tempting little bundle. Two or three times a day she came for a little talk with her new friend and she learned to love her dearly. But one day she found the little house broken up, and the pansy seed gone. Sadly she ran home, and cried many bitter tears for her little friend. Every day she went to the spot she last saw her little friend and mourned for her.

One day feeling the earth warm about her she pushed her way up to the top to see what was going on. Oh! what a beautiful world was this! The sun shining so brightly on the forest of green things about her—and—there close beside her on a twig was her old friend of last year—robin-red-bread singing as if his throat would burst. Catching sight of the little red ant he hop-

ped down beside her and said with his little head on one side—"Oh, ho little friend here you are again, but why so sad?"

"Oh dear," said the little red ant, I have lost my friend the pansy, and I do miss her so."

"Lost the pansy?" said little Robin-red-bread, and he hopped on a twig close by and gurgled the happiest little gurgle. The poor little ant was so hurt that she was about to run down her stairs to hide her sorrow in the ground, when he hopped close to her side again, and said in such a soft cooing voice—"no, no, little ant, you have not lost your friend. She has only come up to our world and there she is close by you.

"Where oh where!" said the little red ant, as she looked about on the brown earth for the little pansy seed she knew and loved so well.

"Here! here! I am," said the same sweet voice she had heard down in the dark world, in which they had lived together. "Up here, little ant, don't you know me?" and looking up she saw the sweetest little flower face smiling down upon her, and in some strange way she knew this pretty flower was really her dear old friend.

"Oh, dear," said the little ant. "I thought you were dead." "Yes, dear," said the pansy, I know, but I was not, I was up here all the time in the lovely sunshine and sweet air listening to the song of the birds, doing God's will. I have thought of you always and loved you dear, I thought you would know I was here where God needs me now. And we are still friends, aren't we," and she nodded her little head so cunningly.

But the little red ant could not stay talking to her flower friend for she knew that she had work to do down in the little brown house under ground."

"I am so glad to know where you are, but God wishes me to stay and work in the ground, I think, so I must go," and she ran away down her stairway to her underground home and busied herself taking care of her babies.

She was no longer sad, but so happy that as she went about her little duties she sang so softly, in her ant fashion, a sweet little song of joy, and it was all about the bright world above, the little friend who lived there now, and the kind Father who loved them both.

Maisie was very still for many minutes, then she said softly.

"Is Heaven very high up?"

"No, dear, it is not far away."

"And is Elsie a baby still?"

"We do not know, dear but we do know she is living and with God, and we are glad are we not?"

"When I want her I'll just think of where she is, and pretend I am there too, then I won't be lonely.

"Mother, dear, she said as she put her arms around her mother's neck, as she stooped to say good-night to the little one still with her! "don't cry any more Elsie isn't dead at all, she is just up in the beautiful world with God, doing messages for him and waiting for us to come—"

"In the beautiful world with God, my baby! oh! my baby!" whispered Mrs. Trent, as she bowed her head on the golden

curls, and a loving face smiled down upon her, and a tender voice whispered, "In my Father's house are many mansions, I go to prepare a place for you," and she too was comforted.

Climbing up the Hill.

BY JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.

Never look behind, boys,

Up and on the way!

Time enough for that, boys,

On some future day.

Though the way be long, boys,

Fight it with a will;

Never stop to look behind,

When climbing up a hill.

First be sure you're right, boys,

Then with courage strong,

Strap your pack upon your back,

And tug, tug along;

Better let the lag-lout

Fill the lower bill,

And strike the farther stake-pole

Higher up the hill.

Write a Letter to Yourself.

Following is part of a letter written by a girl of twelve to herself when she would be sixteen. It is from a recent novel by Florence Wilkinson:

"Dear Me:—I don't mean that I feel badly, but it's because I'm writing to me when I'm sixteen. Oh, how I do wish that I could see you and know where you are and how big you will be. I was twelve years old last November, but it is now January. Fractions is something dreadful. Dear myself, are you doing fractions now when you read this? I s'pose you understand all about them and the queer problems at the end of the book. Do you have to study? Of course not, for you are a young lady, and have dresses with long hems that make a lovely sound when you come down stairs, and little girls behind you have to walk very slow for fear they will step on the trail of your ruffles.

"You can't answer this, I know, for by the time you get it, there will be no I. Your loving self, ALLISON."

Write yourself a letter to-night picturing yourself a year from now, or write a letter to night picturing yourself as a boy or young man, or when you become a Christian. Stand yourself up in the corner and look at yourself.

"If thou couldst in vision see
Thyself, the man God meant,
Thou never more couldst be
The man thou art—content."

A Turkish Legend.

A certain pacha, dead these thousand years,
Once from his harem fled in sudden tears,

And had this sentence on the city's gate
Deeply engraven, "Only God is great."

So those four words above the city's noise
Hung like the accents of an angel's voice,

And evermore, from the high barbacan,
Saluted each returning caravan.

Lost in that city's glory. Every gust
Lifts, with crisp leaves, the unknown pacha's
dust.

And all is ruin—save one wrinkled gate
Whereon is written, "Only God is great."

—Aldrich.

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