

think he will remember about cousin Horace having forgotten to feed his white mice in the coachhouse till they had to eat one another, and most of them were dead?"

Effie shuddered at the remembrance. "It was too dreadful, quite," she said.

"And Jim, the stable-boy, forgot to give the tiny black birds anything to drink, and found them all dead in the morning," added Cicely, on whom the sad fate of the poor little robbed nestlings had made a great impression. She had seen Tim sling out the wee dead bodies on the rubbish heap outside the stable door for the cats to eat, or to be carted away to the dust-heap, and her pitiful heart could not bear the sight. So when the children had gone into the garden to play, she stole round to the spot where they lay, with their pretty, pluffy heads hanging limp, and their tiny wings stretched helplessly out, and putting them into the small basket she had brought for the purpose, she carried them to her own little bit of garden, and buried them tenderly among her plants, picking many a pansy and nasturtium to lay over them ere she covered them with earth.

"Don't let us think of it," said Arnold, who had watched the transaction with much childish grief and many a tear.

The children relapsed into silence, but it was quickly broken by light-hearted Effie, who suddenly jumped down from her seat, and running round to where Margery was sitting, grave and preoccupied, flung her arms round her neck.

"A penny for your thoughts!" she cried, giving her sister a hearty hug and kiss.

Margery smiled—that beautiful smile which some people have who usually look grave, which lights up the whole countenance. "You can have my thoughts without paying the penny," she said. "I was thinking how simply splendid it would be if the King should stoop to say to us, 'Well done!' and tell us to enter His Kingdom. And I was wondering—for you know the clergyman said that life is so uncertain, that we may die any time, like Minnie Evans, who died of a fit in a few minutes—and I was wondering which of us would be the first to enter the Kingdom."

"I hope it won't be me," said Effie. "I could not bear to leave all my nice toys and things, and father and mother, and go all alone into that Great Place."

Little Arnold coloured up with fear at the bare idea, and clutched Cicely's plump hand under the table as he whispered, "We will go together, Cicely, won't we?" and she could only give a sympathising squeeze back in return, though her own heart was beating rather fast as she said, "Oh, yes, dear if I can!"

But Margery, who had heard the remarks of the younger ones, said, "Why should we fear to enter the Kingdom, when Christ has prepared it for us, and means all the glory as a great surprise? And all His holy angels are sure to be kind to children, because He loves them so."

Effie did not like the turn which the conversation had taken, and was just on the point of going back to their "Sunday pictures," when nurse came in with the tea-tray. And

the children's thoughts were turned to another direction altogether, for they were to have the first strawberries and cream of the season that evening as a Sunday treat; and soon they were busily dividing the beautiful fruit, and sprinkling them over with sugar.

For some time they were too engrossed with their pleasant occupation to talk much; but presently Arnold noticed that Margery was hardly tasting her strawberries.

"Don't you like them, Margery?" he asked, surprised that she seemed to care so little for what he liked so much.

"Oh, yes," she answered, colouring, "but I thought that poor Sally Turner, who is so very ill, might like a few in this hot weather: and her mother is far too poor to buy her any."

The other children looked at their nearly empty plates.

"What a pity we have eaten ours!" said Effie. "I never thought of Sally—and she would have liked them so much."

"I think there are as many here as she will be able to take," said Margery, neatly arranging those on her plate. "Mother said she could hardly eat anything."

part with so much, mother, for you said he was very rich."

"Yes," said mother, stroking his curly head, "but he did not find it hard to give, because he loved Jesus so much."

And there the Bible lesson had ended.

But Margery could not get the words out of her mind. "The half of my goods," "the half of my goods," she kept repeating to herself. "I have never done anything like that, though I have so little to give, and he had so much." And then she resolved that, from that day, she too would give "the half of her goods," just as Zacchæus had done, and, going to her cupboard where she kept all her toys and treasures, she divided her childish possessions into two heaps, and after a good deal of thought carried the larger half to her mother.

"I should like to send these to the sick children in the hospital," she said so quietly that no one would have guessed the sacrifice she was making.

Mother looked surprised, as she noticed most of Margery's pet toys among the number. "Will you not want them again yourself?" she asked. "If you sent some of these it would be quite enough."

But Margery would not hear of it. "I have specially picked them out," she said, with a little quaver in her voice. "And I wish them all to go; the sick children need them more than I do!"

And since that day Margery had always carefully divided everything that was given her (provided it could be divided), and the very doing it gave her untold pleasure. For had not the "Friend of little children," of whom she loved to sing at the Sunday afternoon services, loaded her with good things, not because He wanted her to be selfish with them, but to let her experience for herself that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." "I have so much more than I need," she would say to herself sometimes, when halving a bright new half-crown or shilling was a little trying.

So the half of the strawberries had been set aside as a matter of course, and she felt so glad that they had come just when poor Sally was so ill, and needed them most.

Margery went to bed with a very happy heart that night—for had not the clergyman told them that afternoon that the Lord Jesus notices everything that His little children do for Him, and would remember it when He said, "Ye did it unto Me." "And He noticed the widow's mite," thought the child, "more than the rich people's gifts, though many that were rich cast in much."

"Oh! Effie," she said, when the two little girls were going to bed that evening, "Oh! Effie, I am so glad that, if we are called 'one by one,' I am not afraid, even if I am the first to enter the Kingdom."

## CHAPTER II

MEANWHILE Cicely and Arnold had been safely put to bed by nurse, and then left to go to sleep; nurse turning down the lamp low, so that it might not keep the children awake, and putting it on the side-table that the light might not shine in their eyes.



IN THE NURSERY.

"But they won't be from us!" said Effie, rather sadly.

"Oh, we can all take them over in the morning," answered Margery, "and Sally will think they are from us all."

But Effie was not quite satisfied. "It would not be fair," she said, "for us to give what is really yours."

"We could ask mother to give us some sponge cakes and jelly," suggested Cicely—whose gifts were generally of mother's supplying—and I am sure she will."

"Oh, that will do capitally!" exclaimed Arnold, glad that the difficulty should be so easily solved, and without the necessity of any self-denial on his part.

But to Margery the laying aside of her favourite fruit had hardly been self-denial. She had just begun a new plan with regard to everything that was given her, which gave her the greatest satisfaction. It had been suggested to her when mother had read them the story of Zacchæus one morning, which had made a great impression on her mind.

"And did Zacchæus really give half of everything he had to the poor?" little Arnold had asked. "It must have been very hard to

(To be Continued.)

