

The Summer Shower.

A tinkling as of tiny bells,  
A tap upon the pane;  
And hark, the pleasant news it tells,—  
To parching hills and thirsty dells  
Has come the blessed rain,—  
The blessed summer rain!

Meadows, renew your robes once more;  
Drink deep, ye fields of grain;  
Hold up your cups, each tiny flower,  
Receive the grateful, cooling shower,  
The blessed, blessed rain,—  
The blessed summer rain!

Ye brooks, that gurgle faint and hoarse,  
Ring out a merrier strain;  
And scatter freshness in your course,  
In grateful memory of your source,  
The blessed, blessed rain,—  
The blessed summer rain!

NEMO

OR

The Wonderful Door.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "CHRISTIE'S OLD ORGAN."

CHAPTER III.

THE POWER OF A SMILE.

There was dead silence in the house when Abel Grey re-entered it. Was the baby dead, and had the milk come too late to save its life?

Anxiously, and with trembling hands, he lifted the little bundle from the bed and took it in his arms. The child still breathed. "Thank God for that!" said Abel to himself.

But the poor little man had never fed a baby in his life, and though he had now bought the milk, and had fetched a cup and a spoon from his old home, his difficulties were not yet over. The baby was very hungry, but it had not been accustomed to a spoon, and it choked and cried and spilt far more milk than it swallowed, and Abel was almost in despair as he looked ruefully at its pretty white nightgown, which was now drenched with the milk it had spilt.

"I'm not cut out for a nurse, that's clear," said Abel, with a sigh; "but, dearie me, what a bonnie little thing it is! Why, it's never laughing at me!"

Yes, it was, though! The small blue eyes had opened, and the child was smiling in Abel's face. That smile went right to the little man's heart, it was so seldom that any one smiled on him. He had received plenty of kicks and blows, and had been met by cruel words and still more cruel laughter, but how few had smiled at him as that baby was doing! He felt repaid for his bad night and for his anxiety about the child, one such smile as that made up for it all.

But it was past eight o'clock, and he must see the landlord, and find out to whom the baby belonged. "I had better take it with me," he said, "and then he can see what it's like, and read the card that was round its neck."

But as he pictured to himself the shouts of laughter which would be raised by the countless children who spent their time in trying to annoy him, if he should appear in the street with a baby in his arms, he decided that his better course would be to bring the landlord to see the baby, and to lock it up meanwhile in the empty house.

It began to cry as he went downstairs, and it went to his heart to leave it, but what else could he do?

The landlord and his wife were much interested and amused by his tale, but they could give him very little help towards discovering the parents of the child. The people whom he had seen in the house had only been in it a week; they had come to him to give in their notice and to pay a month's rent, but they had told him that he was at liberty to let the house at once, as they were going abroad the following day. He could not even remember the name of these people; his nephew had shown them over the house, and had given them the key, and "he has a shocking bad memory, has George Thomas," said the landlady; "I tell him he will forget his own name some day."

"But you shall have no bother about the child," said the landlord, who was anxious to be civil to his new tenant; "you go home, keep your mind easy, and I'll see all about it. We must tell the police, of course, and see what they can do, and we must get it removed to the House at once."

So Abel Grey went home, but somehow or other his heart did not feel happy. In a few hours at most the baby would be gone, his quiet life would no longer be disturbed; and yet the thought of that did not cheer him or please him as it would have done a few hours be-

fore. He had still fresh in his memory the baby smile, which had won his heart so strangely. He wondered whether the child would smile in the workhouse, and if it did, whether there would be any one there who would care to see it smile.

He had been a workhouse child himself till old Betty had taken him. She had always loved to see him smile, and had smiled back again at him. He would not like this little baby to have none but stern, hard faces about it.

Abel's new abode had several visitors that morning. Two policemen came to look at the child, and to read the card in a knowing way, as if "Nemo" had been a friend of theirs for years, and to examine the cupboard, and to write a description of it in an enormous notebook. Poor little wretched cupboard, there was not much in it to describe!

Then they asked Abel so many questions that they frightened him, and he began to fear that if they did not find the owners of the child they would be putting him in prison for finding it.

Abel was very glad when these men departed, but they were soon followed by the doctor, who felt the child's pulse, and smelt its breath, and tried its heart, and told him that it had been drugged, but that it was no worse for it now, and would live if it was taken care of.

"Poor little forsaken thing!" thought Abel. "Who will take care of it in the House? They've such a lot of babies there to look to, they'll never have time nor heart to tend it."

When the doctor had gone, the relieving officer came, and he was in a very bad temper. "What did people mean by having children to be brought up by the parish?" he said. "The parish had plenty of babies of its own, without taking in stray babies like this. It would be a great expense to the parish, and the parish wouldn't like it."

He was so angry, and stamped so much with his foot, and thumped the floor so loudly with his stick, that Abel was more afraid of him than he had been of the policemen. "I'm very sorry, sir, but I can't help it," said Abel meekly; "it isn't my fault, sir."

"No, it isn't, certainly," said the man; "we must make allowances, of course. You did not know it was here when you took the house, did you?"

"No, indeed, sir," said Abel. "Well, then, all things considered, I suppose I must take it into the House. I'll send for it, or maybe you could bring it. Yes, bring it, that will be the best plan, and then you can tell the matron all about it. Good-day," and, without waiting for Abel to answer, he was gone.

Abel was once more alone with his baby. His baby—how he wished that it were indeed his! How he would love it if it were his very own! He wondered if old Betty felt something like this when she looked at him. Poor Betty, how she had loved him, and how proud she had been of him! Well, he must set off for the House as soon as he had had his dinner, but he must give the child another meal; it was hungry again now, poor little thing, and was crying softly to itself on the bed.

The second meal was a greater success than the first. Either Abel had grown more experienced as a nurse, or the baby had become more clever with the spoon, for the child took more and spilt less, and rewarded Abel with another sweet smile when the meal was ended.

"Now, my little love, you'll have to go," he said, as he wrapped the shawl tightly round it and carried it downstairs.

The children were in school, and the street was nearly empty, so that few met him or noticed what he was carrying, and it was not long before he stood before the great workhouse gate, the very gate through which old Betty had carried him when he was a child.

There stood the great workhouse gate, and inside was the large black door. So solemn and dismal it looked, that Abel sighed to himself as he gazed at it, and as he thought of the cold cheerless life the child would have inside. The great bell was too high for Abel's short arm to reach it, and he stood for some time waiting for some one to pass who would ring it for him.

But just then the baby woke, and the blue eyes opened wide and looked into his face, and once more there came the pretty baby smile which had gone to his heart before. Abel looked up from that sweet smile to the black door in front of him. He could not take the child there, —at least, not to-night, he must keep it a little longer, and love it and care for it, as old Betty had loved and cared for him. No, he could not part from it yet.

So he carried it home and sat down beside it on the bed, whilst he considered what to do next. If he had only a friend, if there was only some one who would help him a little, and who would advise him what to do, and who would show him how to care for the child, he would like to keep it till it was a little

older, and was more fit to bear the rough life in the workhouse.

Whom could he ask to help him? Abel had many cruel tormentors, but since Betty had died he had never had a friend, there seemed to be no one to whom he could turn in his need.

The only person into whose house he had ever gone as a friend was an old man, who lived in an attic in a court close to his old home. Abel felt very sorry for this old man, for he was always alone. He was too lame with rheumatism to creep down the steep attic stairs, and so he sat by himself day after day, with no change in his life whatever. His niece lived in the room below, but she was out at work all day in a factory at the other end of the town, and he only saw her for a few minutes every night, when she came upstairs to see how he was, and to bring him food for the next day. She was a very silent woman, and was tired after her day's work, and she never stopped with him a moment longer than was necessary.

Abel had not known this old man long. He had been one evening to the house to take some nails which the niece had ordered from his shop, and as she had not yet returned from work, and her room was locked, the old man had called on him to come upstairs.

Abel's kind little heart was touched by the loneliness of poor old Amos, and since then he had several times been to see him, and had read the newspaper to him, and had told him a little of what was going on outside his dismal room. Yet, lonely as he was, old Amos always was bright and cheerful, and Abel used to puzzle over this, and wonder what it was which could make him happy and contented in such a miserable place.

Now, as he sat on the bed beside the child, the thought came across him that it was just possible Amos might help him in his difficulty about the child. Yet he did not seem a very likely person, for was he not a man? and men generally know nothing about babies. But it was Abel's one and only chance of getting help and advice, so he set out for Amos' garret with the baby in his arms.

When he had climbed the stairs, and was standing at the door, he thought he heard talking inside, and fearing it might be Amos' gloomy niece, he stood still to listen. But there was no voice to be heard but that of old Amos, the trembling, feeble voice he knew so well. To whom could the old man be talking?

Abel put his ear to the door and listened. "I am only a poor old man, O Lord," said the shaky voice of Amos, "but I do love thee; thou hast washed me in thy blood, O Lord, and made me clean, and now I want to do something for thee; and, Lord, what can I do? Old, and poor, and weak, is there nothing, Lord, for Amos to do?"

"Why, he's saying his prayers," said Abel to himself; "he must be going to bed very early to-night," and he hardly liked to knock at the attic door. But he felt as if he must see the old man that night; so, after a time, he ventured to give a gentle tap.

Amos called to him to come in, and he opened the door. The old man was not undressed, but was sitting over his small fire, slowly stirring some milk in a little pan on the hob.

"Oh, it's you, Abel Grey, is it?" he said, as he went in.

"Yes," said Abel, "it's me, Amos; and look what I've brought to show ye."

Amos put down the spoon and turned round.

"Why, it's never a baby, Abel! Wherever in the world did you get it?"

"Look at it," said Abel, proudly, as he unplanned its shawl; "isn't it pretty?" And then he told the story of his discovery, and of all that had happened since.

"I can't bear to let it go to the House," he said,—"at least, not just yet; but it's just here, ye see, Amos, I don't know nothing about babies, so I don't know if I dare try to keep it—maybe I shall kill it if I do. Amos, did ye ever have aught to do with a bairn as young as this?"

The old man smiled. "Aught to do with a bairn?" he said; "why, I've had sixteen of 'em, Abel, and they're all dead and gone now. One was drowned, and one he went for a soldier, and was killed in the war, and one,—ay, but she was a bonnie lass—she died of the typhoid fever, and some they went when they was babies, but I've nursed 'em all, Abel, nursed and tended 'em all. My missus, she was a delicate woman, ye see, and couldn't stand what some women can, so I used to help her of nights, and walk about with the baby when it was cross, and tend it and give it its bottle. Ay, babies, bless 'em—I ought to know what babies are as well as any man alive, Abel—and I'll say more, as well as a vast deal of women."

"There was once we had two of 'em together, little twin girls, Polly and

Sally we called 'em, and they both died of convulsion fits when they was getting their teeth, but I almost lived for them babies when I had 'em. Why, Abel, my lad, many's a time I've got up to wash and dress 'em before I went to my work, to save my poor missus a bit of trouble. And then there was little Birdie—she was the youngest, the missus died when she was born. Her name was Belinda, but I called her Birdie, because the Lord seemed to have sent her to cheer me in my trouble, and to sing to me that he loved me yet. Well, Birdie was my child altogether, for she never knew a mother, and I did everything for her, Abel, till the Lord gathered my little flower. She was only two years old when he came for her, Abel, and I thought I should never have smiled again.

"Yes, I know as much of babies as any mother does, my lad, and if you think you'll keep that poor little forsaken one a bit, why, trust me for helping you all I can. Maybe the Lord has sent it for you and me to look to, I asked him to send an old man a bit of work to do for him, and now maybe here's the work come in the baby. What's her name, Abel?"

"I believe it's a boy," said Abel, "and his name is Nemo—at least, it said 'Nemo' on the card round its neck."

"Abel," said Amos, "put him on my knee, and you and me will ask the Lord about him."

"O Lord," said the old man, "look at this 'ere baby, if thou means me and Abel to keep him, teach us what to do, and we will do it faithful. O Lord, bless the little lad, now and ever. Amen."

"Now then, Abel, take him back," said the old man, "and sit thee down, and I'll tell them what thou wilt want for him. Thou shalt be his mother, and I will be his grandmother, and between us, the good Lord helping us, we'll see if we can't rear him, and make a man of him."

(To be continued.)

STORY OF THE QUEEN'S LIFE.

IX.

A CHAPTER OF ALL SORTS.

It is pleasant to come across the names of the Queen's dogs in her Journals. In one place she tells us about "dear 'Noble,' a beautiful collie. In her morning walk at Balmoral, her dogs are always with her.

When Prince Albert died, Beatrice was but a baby. She is now her mother's constant companion.

The Queen has many visitors. Years ago, a queer little person from America visited her, General Tom Thumb. The Queen had invited him, and she received him in the great picture gallery at Windsor. The Duchess of Kent and Prince Albert were present, with the court ladies and gentlemen. Tom Thumb was a small wite then; and he advanced gravely towards the royal group, bowed, and said, "Good evening, ladies and gentlemen."

The Queen took his hand, led him about the gallery, and showed him the pictures, which he told her were "first-rate." He wanted to see the Prince of Wales, but the Prince of Wales being then a little fellow, had gone to bed. But the drollest part of the affair was when he took his leave. It is etiquette, i.e., it is the proper thing to do, to back out of the presence of royalty. But the General, being an American, was not used to doing this. So he would back a little way, then turn and make a short run, and then back again; and the Queen's little poodle was so angry, he flew at the General, and he had to defend himself with his cane. He made several visits to Windsor, and the Queen-dowager, widow of William the Fourth, gave him a beautiful little watch.

David Livingstone, the missionary and famous traveller, once visited the Queen. The Queen sent for him. He went to see her in his usual dress, wearing the cap with its gilt band, that he always wore in Africa.

The Queen talked with him a long time. She asked him many questions about Africa and the Africans. When he rose to go, he said, "Now, when I go back to Africa, and the African chiefs ask me if I have ever seen my chief, I can say 'yes.'"

He told the Queen that the Africans often asked him if his chief was rich, and when he said "yes," they asked him how many cows she owned. The Queen laughed merrily at this.

Among the many presents the Queen has received, was one, in 1877, from the Emperor of Brazil. It was a dress woven from spiders'webs. It is more beautiful than any silk, and it was the first successful attempt to weave spiders' threads.