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Bessie Grant.

It was a bright and sunny morning in the sweet month of June when little Bessie Grant was roused from sleep by Norah, her nurse, who drew up the window-blind, saying at the same time, "Why, Miss Bessie, do you mean to sleep all day? It is nearly nine o'clock, and your mother is all ready downstairs."

Then Bessie sat up in bed, still feeling very sleepy, and slowly began to rub her eyes.

"And besides, Miss Bessie," added nurse, with a smile, "have you forgotten what day this is?"

Bessie stared sleepily at nurse for a minute or two, then jumped out of bed. "Oh, I remember now!" she said joyfully. "It is my birthday, and mother is to take me to see the Forth Bridge. Oh, nurse, please do look out of the window and tell me if it is a fine day!"

"It is a lovely day, my dear," said her kind nurse. "Now dress yourself neatly; and do not forget to read your verses and say your prayers. After that you may go down to your mother; but go very quietly, my dear, for baby is still sleeping, and I do not wish him to be roused just yet."

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Bessie promised to be very careful, and as nurse left the room, she began to dress herself, smiling all the time at the pleasant prospect which lay before her.

Bessie Grant was a dear, good little girl, seven years of age, and her mother's only little daughter. Her home was in Edinburgh, and a very bright and happy home it was, although, as she had no sisters, she sometimes found it rather dull to have no one to play with except her doll. One day, however, her mother had given her a sweet little canary bird, saying at the same time, "This little bird is quite tame, Bessie, my dear, and I am sure you will find it a more pleasant companion than your doll. But you must be kind to it, Bessie, and always remember to give it seed and fresh water every day."

Only imagine how happy Bessie felt as she took the cage into her hands, thanking her mother at the same time most gratefully. "Oh, mother dear!" she cried, "I shall love it so much and attend to it so carefully! Oh, I never could forget to feed my darling little pet!" Then away she ran to show her little canary to Norah, who admired it very much, and helped the little girl to hang the cage upon a large nail on the play-room wall.

For a whole month after that happy time Bessie never forgot to take down the cage, fill the seed-box, and put fresh water in the glass. Then she would give her little pet a piece of cake or sugar, which dickie always

took from her hand; after which, to show his gratitude, he would flutter his wings and trill one of his sweetest songs. Oh, he was indeed a little darling! One sad day, however, when Bessie was taking down the cage, she let it fall by mistake, and the cage came with some force down to the hard wooden floor. Bessie screamed for nurse, who was only in the next room, and who came running at once to ask what was the matter. The poor broken cage was lifted up at once; the water-glass was broken, the seed all scattered about, and, worst of all, poor dear little dickie lay quiet and still with his pretty eyes already dim and almost closed. Alas! her little pet was dead. Never again would she hear him sing, never again would he pick a morsel of cake from her hand.

Bessie burst into tears as she lifted up the soft little ball of yellow feathers, kissed it tenderly, and then carried the dead bird to her mother. Mrs. Grant consoled her little daughter as well as she could, pointed out to her that although it was a sad accident, it would have been a great deal worse if she had neglected her pet and let him

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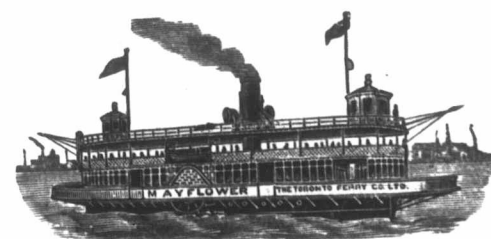
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