

lasting rest; with leisure too, to think on her own anxieties, which for the moment had been entirely set aside by her sympathy with this household. Hers was indeed a heart that could be

'At leisure from itself,  
To soothe and sympathise.'

She was much with God that night. That poor kitchen became a sanctuary. In after years that dim oil-lamp, that glimmering firelight, that dying child, were all associated with the divine presence of him who 'is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.' At length came the grey dawn, and with it a slight movement in the cradle.

Lina called the mother hastily, and together they watched the baby-spirit passing away. The mother's grief was heartrending, but by degrees some comfort crept into her soul as she listened to Lina's loving words of consolation.

"Suffer little children to come unto Me." Ay, I must think of that now. Strange, how I had forgotten those words. I knew them once, but they had slipped away from me. Say them again.'

So again and yet again Lina said them, and took occasion to speak also of that Gracious One by whom they were uttered, how he left his heavenly throne to come down as a helpless baby, even as this one here had been, so that he might redeem us by living and dying for us.

'And do you think,' said Lina, earnestly, 'that he whose love was so great will desert you now in this your great sorrow? He is here as truly as you and I are here; we have his promise that he is; let us tell the trouble to him.'

So together they knelt down, while Lina pleaded for all those 'afflicted in mind, body, or estate.' Then they talked quietly for some time till the daylight was quite broad.

'Now I am going to get you some tea,' said Lina, 'then I will prepare this little body for its resting-place, and help you about the funeral.'

'There isn't any tea in the house, or bread either,' said the poor mother, 'and Tommy will soon be awake and crying for his breakfast. I had forgotten all about eating.'

'The shops will be open by now. I'll go and get some food,' said Lina.

She went out, and meanwhile Tommy awoke, and, as his mother had anticipated, declared himself hungry.

'And, mother, who is that woman who came last night?'

'Dear me, Tommy, I never thought of asking her name. Well, to think of it. How stupid of me! But I was that dazed, and am still, that I can think of nothing properly. Except of one thing, though, the joyful news she brought me about baby.'

'Baby's better, then?' he asked, looking into the cradle, but turning away again awed.

'Yes, baby's better. She'll never know pain any more, nor sin. She's gone to heaven, to be with the kind Jesus who said, "Suffer little children to come unto Me." And we may be sure he will be good to her, Tommy, for it was he who loved us so much that he came down as a little baby to grow up and die for us. That's the joyful news, Tommy. It's joyful news indeed.'

Tommy took it up as a refrain, 'Joyful news! Joyful news!' not at all understanding it, but feeling that he need not cry or be so miserable as he was last night, because his mother seemed so much happier. "'Joyful news!" Where is she now? Will she come back?'

'I think so, Tommy, soon. She's gone to get some breakfast.'

'Breakfast!' shouted Tommy 'Tommy

hungry. "Joyful News," gone to get Tommy's breakfast. Hurrah!'

Lina at length returned, laden with tea, sugar, bread and butter. The mother met her with something like a smile on her pale face.

'Here's Tommy been giving you a name,' she said, 'as I never had the sense to ask you what yours was. He's been calling you "Joyful News," cos I told him what you'd said about baby.'

'I wish I deserved that name,' said Lina. 'My real name is Lina Preston, and in five more days I sha'n't have a home in the world,' she added brightly.

'Well, I shall call you 'Joyful News.' It suits you real well, for you do seem the best and kindest creature that ever lived. But I'm sorry you're badly off; though, indeed, you don't seem to take it much to heart,' said the woman.

'What have you done here?' asked Lina, glancing at the re-arranged cradle. 'I told you I would do all that.'

'Why should you?' said the mother. 'I'd a washed and dressed her if she'd been living; why should I mind doing so now that she's dead?'

Very beautiful the tiny baby face looked in the calm majesty of death. Lina turned round to see how Tommy was affected, and to comfort him if he were frightened. But he had solemnly marched up to the fireplace with a medicine bottle very nearly empty, and was holding it upside down, so that the contents drained out into the fire.

'Bab will want no more of this now,' he remarked, with an air of deepest wisdom.

In spite of their sorrow, the two women could not help smiling.

'No one knows what a comforter he is,' said his mother. 'Again and again he has almost made me forget my troubles, for the moment, by his funny little ways.'

Lina's trust was not in vain. On the evening of the baby's funeral the vicar of the parish called to see her. He told her that his present bible-woman was moving to another district, and there seemed no one exactly fitted to take her place. 'Unless,' he said, 'you think you can undertake it.'

Lina's eyes filled with grateful tears. 'Oh, sir,' she said, 'there is no life I should like better! But do you think I am worthy? It seems too good to be true.'

'My good woman, there is no one who would do the work better. But I thought perhaps you had other plans in view. It's a poor salary, and you've no private means, I know.'

'I have but one wish,' said Lina simply, 'and that is that I may 'follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.'" And I think I have been brought up to live upon as little as most.'

Eventually, therefore, it was decided that Lina should move to her humble lodgings the very next day, and begin her work as soon as she liked. How thankful she was; how her heart sang with gratitude! Needless to say her first visit was to the bereaved mother, who happened to live in the very street that had now become Lina's special district. Of course the poor woman was loud in the praises of the new biblewoman.

'We've got a good un now, I reckon,' she said to her neighbors. 'A rare un she is. I never shall forget her the night baby died. 'Joyful News' is a rare un, I can tell you.'

'Why, is that her name?' they said. 'No, of course not. She did tell me her other, but I forget. But my Tommy would call her "Joyful News," and it seems to suit her best.'

So being introduced by that name, no one in that district hardly ever called her anything else. Well she earned it. All down the rows of houses anxious souls hailed the

sight of her; for her very smile and presence was a comfort and joy, and so was the news which it was the business of her life to carry.

'As poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.' "Joyful News's" pocket was often very nearly empty, yet she was rich indeed—in love, in cheerfulness, in true charity.—'Light in the Home.'

## Lucinda.

(By Dorothy E. Nelson.)

Mrs. Crocker was spending the afternoon with Mrs. Blanchard. Lucinda had seen her coming and ran away to the attic with a book. Lucinda was a very conscientious little girl, and she left the attic door open in case her mother called, but she kept hoping that she should get so interested in her book that she would not hear. But her very anxiety not to hear made her more alert than usual. She fancied she heard her mother's step a dozen times, more than once she involuntarily put her fingers in her ears, but she removed them instantly, and sat waiting with a look of wretched expectancy. Finally her mother really did call.

'Yes'm, I'm coming,' answered Lucinda. She closed her book and went slowly down stairs. She stopped quite a while outside the sitting-room door, and finally opened it and hurried into the room as if thrust in by the physical embodiment of her own desperate resolution.

Mrs. Crocker looked up and held out her hand.

'Ain't you going to shake hands, Lucinda?' she said.

Lucinda crossed the room and put a little limp hand into Mrs. Crocker's. Her color was coming and going nervously. Lucinda was fourteen—though she looked no more than eleven—but she had not yet overcome her childish dread of strangers; even neighbors whom she had known all her life were formidable to her. Now she stood there, with her shy eyes raised appealingly to Mrs. Crocker's, looking like a little shrinking figure of dread.

'Haven't you anything to say to me, Lucinda?'

'I—I hope you're pretty well,' faltered Lucinda helplessly.

Lucinda's mother looked at her compassionately. 'I guess it's most time for you to feed the chickens, Lucinda,' she said.

Lucinda gave her a grateful glance and slipped away as silently as a shadow. She ran out to the barn and fed the chickens, and then walked down the road a piece. Her spirits had risen now that the ordeal was over; she sang to herself in a sweet little high voice, as she filled her arms with long plumes of golden-rod.

Suddenly she heard voices, and like some shy wild creature she shrank into a clump of bushes by the roadside. It was Mrs. Crocker and Lucinda's Sunday-school teacher, Miss May Atwood. Lucinda loved Miss May dearly, and wanted to speak to her, but couldn't bring herself to face Mrs. Crocker again; so she stood still. As they came nearer she caught a few words—Mrs. Crocker was speaking.

'Yes, I saw Lucinda for a minute,' she said. 'I never saw any one act so in my life! Looks as if she thought you'd eat her up if you spoke to her! It must be a real cross to Mrs. Blanchard—an' she such a pretty-mannered woman, too; I felt just like speaking my mind out to Lucinda to-day, but she didn't give me a chance! I reckon she knows the commandment—I wanted to ask her if she thought 't was honoring her mother to act so a stranger'd think her