

Children's Corner.

LADY TEMPLE'S GRANDCHILDREN.

CHAPTER XIV.

(Continued.)

Dolly prayed very earnestly for her grandmother before she left her room, and her warm little heart felt very full of sorrow and anxiety. She so wished that grandmother had learned to love her, that she might have been allowed to see her, and help Parker to nurse her; but she felt that this would be out of the question now, and she sighed as she wondered how long it would be before she should be able to win the love she coveted. The child had ceased to have any doubts now about her ultimate success; the only question that troubled her was how long it would take to accomplish the task she had set herself. Had not God promised a blessing to all "peacemakers?" Did she not ask Him day by day to help her to be what her mother had said, "the little dove with the olive branch?" Did she not pray very earnestly that her grandmother might soon learn to love her?

This being the case, could she doubt that her prayer would be answered in God's good time? She did not doubt. She believed with the implicit faith of childhood, and tried to wait patiently.

Duke seemed very indifferent about the news. He did not care much, he said, and seemed most vexed that he was so strictly charged to make no noise upon the stairs, and not to shout or play noisily in the garden.

The day passed much as usual in lessons and exercise, only that there was no grandmother at lunch, but Dr. Gordon instead, who seemed to be spending a great deal of time in the house, and who several times called Miss Manners away from the library to talk to her about something.

Miss Manners was very kind to Dolly, and did not trouble her much about lessons, seeing that she was disturbed and anxious. She told her that Lady Temple was seriously ill, although not dangerously so, that she would be confined to her room for many weeks, and that the house would have to be kept perfectly quiet during this time, and that she believed that the children would have to be sent away for a while, though she did not yet know where.

This news excited Duke very much; but Dolly was not at all sure that she was pleased. A change might be very nice; but going away would mean leaving grandmother and Miss Manners, and Dolly did not think she would at all like doing either.

But before the day was out they knew all about it, and what it was that had been settled.

Whilst they were sitting at tea Dr. Gordon came in to see them, as he often did when he happened to be near the house, and Duke greeted his entrance with vociferous delight, but Dolly raised her eyes wistfully to his, and wondered if he had come to tell them anything about grandmother.

"Well, young people," began the doctor kindly, "what would you say, both of you, to a visit to the sea-side?"

"The sea-side!" repeated Duke, with energy, "why that's just where Bruce and Edgar said they were all going. In India people all went up to the hills in summer, and over here they go to the seaside. What is it like?"

"Would you like to go and see for yourselves?"

Duke capered about with excitement.

"Are we going?"

"What do you think?"

"Don't tease, Dr. Gordon," cried Duke impatiently; "please tell us!"

"Well then, Mrs. Lennox has asked if you and Dolly may join her party for Denmouth on Friday, and your grandmother wishes you to go for a week or two at least."

Duke was enraptured, full of eager questions and delighted comments.

"Shall we have holidays all the time?"

"I daresay you will."

"Shall we have boats and spades, and things like Edgar and Hubert?"

"Oh, yes."

"May we bathe in the sea, like they do?"

"Certainly."

"Do they know I am coming?"

"They know you are invited, and are very pleased about it."

But Dolly did not join in this eager talk. She was half pleased, yet half sad; and she by and by drew near to Dr. Gordon, who put his arm about her kindly and asked—

"Well, my little maiden, what do you think of it all?"

"I want to know, please, how is grandmother?"

"Doing well, but still very poorly."

"Couldn't I stay and help to take care of her?" asked Dolly, looking up to him with her serious gaze. "I used to take care of mamma whenever she was poorly, and she used to say I was a very good little nurse. Would grandmother let me help to nurse her?"

"Would you rather do that, than go away to the sea-side?"

"I think I would, if she would let me."

"Why so, my child?"

"Because I love her," answered Dolly simply. Doctor Gordon smiled and kissed her gently on the forehead.

"I think we must send you away for a little while to the sea, until the worst is over; but grandmother will be a long while in getting quite well, and you will have plenty of chances of showing how well you can take care of her when you come back."

Dolly looked up with a pleased smile.

"And your little friend Molly has quite set her heart on having you for a companion. She is pining for a breath of sea air, and she will enjoy her visit twice as much for having you with her. She tells me you have not been to see her for nearly a week."

"No," answered Dolly, "Duke goes very often; but I have more lessons to do. I only go when grandmother sends me. I want to see Molly again, for I have something to tell her."

And the child looked up into his face with such a sweet, serious smile, that involuntarily he stooped down to kiss her.

"Well, I must go now to tell Mrs. Lennox that you are both pleased to join her party, and that your grandmother wishes you to do so; and you must get all your favourite books and toys, and all you want packed up, so as to be ready to start on Friday."

It was Tuesday evening then, so the next two days were very excited, busy ones. Miss Manners helped them a great deal, for Parker was busy all day in Lady Temple's room, and Lucy had her hands very full.

Dolly's one trouble was the parting from her kind friend; but Miss Manners said the fortnight would soon pass, and then they would be able, she hoped, to come home again.

Friday came, and Dolly at the last moment stood outside her grandmother's door, looking wistfully at the panels which seemed sternly to forbid her entrance. In her hand she held two or three lovely half-blown roses.

Through these past days Parker had sternly refused to allow her to enter the room; but on this very last day surely she would let her go in just to say good-bye.

Suddenly the door opened and Dr. Gordon appeared, not Parker. Dolly's face cleared instantly.

"Well, my little maiden?" he said kindly, "what is it?"

"Please I do so want to say good-bye to dear grandmother," pleaded Dolly; "may I just go in? I will be very quiet."

For answer he took her hand and led her into the darkened room.

Dolly looked toward the bed with awestricken eyes; grandmother looked very, very white and ill in that dim green light, and she did not speak, but only looked intently at them out of the sunken eyes that were still bright and keen.

Dolly stole on tip-toe towards the bed, and laid her flowers down beside one of the pale, wax-like hands. Then she raised herself gently and kissed the white cheek twice very tenderly.

"Dear grandmother," she said softly, "I am so sorry you are ill. I hope you will very soon be better. I wish I were big enough to help to take care of you. Good-bye, dear grandmother. Please do get better very soon."

There was no answer, and the face was still impassive, but yet the lines of it did not look severe, and the eyes rested more gently than they were wont to do upon the child.

At that moment Lucy's voice was heard just outside the now half-open door.

"Come, Master Marmaduke, go in and say good-bye to your grandmother, like a good boy."

"I shan't!" was Duke's very audible response.

"Oh fie, Master Marmaduke, oh fie! Miss Dorothy has gone in, and taken some flowers too. Go in, like a good boy, or your poor grandmother will be sorry."

"I shan't!" repeated Duke again. "I don't like people in bed; and grandmother is always cross. I won't go in—so there!"

No more was said, and the footsteps passed downstairs.

Poor Dolly, much distressed, looked earnestly at her grandmother, hoping so much that she had not heard. The pale face did not move a muscle, but yet the child knew, she could not tell how, that not a word of the short dialogue had escaped her.

Again she reached up to give one last kiss.

"Good-bye, dear, dear grandmother," she whispered. And this time the pale lips moved in answer, and Dolly heard the words with a thrill of surprise and joy.

"Good-bye, my child. God bless you."

CHAPTER XV.

AT THE SEA-SIDE.

"Isn't it lovely!" said Dolly softly, gazing intently out over the sparkling sea; then turning to Molly, who lay upon a pile of rugs within the cool shade of the rocks, she said again, "O Molly, isn't it perfectly lovely?"

"Yes," answered Molly slowly and rather sadly as it seemed to her small companion. "I am very fond of the sea."

"But you don't look happy," said Dolly, sitting down beside her friend in the shadow.

"Is anything the matter?"

"No, not exactly; but somehow it always nearly makes me feel melancholy."

"And me," added Wilfred.

This was the second morning of their stay at the sea-side. A little way off the boys were at play, the younger ones with spades and buckets, Bruce and Edgar scrambling about the rocks in search of boyish spoil. The three more quiet ones sat together out of the glare of the hot sun, enjoying a talk together.

"Does it?" said Dolly, in answer to this admission from her companions. "It makes me feel happy."

"You say you Molly rather glad you were."

"Yes," answered you why."

"I know. I long in the night ever feel as you beautiful while then it all goes ever."

"They don't look different and the same by and tell it to you I wish I could. E true. If it were feel happy, and and not be afraid added Dolly, still speaking half asking God to give me now. and when I only it, it seemed doesn't a bit."

Molly sighed "You must to she said, "we every night. I perhaps then I do. I should like So should I The pause the sound of a call "Wilfred!"

"Well?"

"Come here! "What for?" "To hold this Wilfred's face hated to be ordered he had no wish nook.

"Don't go," be their slave," "You can hear shouted Wilfred "You won't,

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