

THE STORY OF A DAY.

(Mrs. Marshall, in Sunday at Home.)

CHAPTER I.—DAYSFRING.

The blinds were all drawn down in the pretty picturesque houses which, since the Suspension Bridge has spanned the Avon's dun-colored waters just below Clifton Observatory, have sprung up, where not many years ago the birds and the squirrels had it all their own way in the Leigh woods.

The glory of the June morning is so radiant, that it is a pity to think of the sound sleepers in "Mentone," the suggestive name of one of the houses, with a pretty gabled roof and pointed windows.

The sun has been up nearly three hours. The Venetian blinds in Mentone flap gently against the window panes, for the windows are not quite closed, and the morning breeze stirs them as it comes with its message from the woods.

The gentle click against the glass had a soothing rather than a disturbing effect on the sleepers, in the room which faces all the loveliness I have tried to describe. A tap at the door was repeated three times before there was any sign of waking from either of the two pretty beds which were placed at different ends of the spacious room.

At last the occupant of the bed nearest the window sat up, and asked, in a sleepy, incoherent way.

"What is it? Who is there?"

The door opened then, and a tall, graceful figure came quietly into the darkened room.

"Hilda! it is such a lovely morning. Do come out."

"Oh," with a prolonged yawn, "what time is it?"

"Nearly six—do come—you said you wished to be called."

"Did I? well, draw up the blind, and call Lena."

Beatrice advanced to the window, and pulled up the blind by the cords, with a sharp noise, which made the occupant of the other bed exclaim crossly, as well as sleepily,

"Do be quiet, Hilda."

"It is not Hilda—it is I, Beatrice—look, Lena—what a glorious morning; get up and come out."

"What nonsense! I am sure I shan't. I wish you would not come and wake me," and Lena rolled round again and said no more.

As Beatrice stood and looked out on the morning, with loving, wistful eyes, the morning seemed to smile at her. The masses of her golden hair shone in the light; and as she turned at last and faced Hilda, who had gone so far as to put on her dressing-gown, for an expedition to the bath-room, she said:

"Beatrice, as you stand there with your back to the window, your hair makes a light all round you, and everything else is dark. You look so solemn in that plain black dress—I never can believe you are as young as Lena, and only two years older than I am."

Beatrice laughed a low, silvery laugh, and answered: "I daresay not. I feel older than a child like you, with your kitten ways and saucy manners. Come, I will give you twenty minutes to dress, and then I expect you to be ready."

Hilda was wide awake now, and, seizing Beatrice by the waist, danced off with her down the long corridor, rapping sharply at a door as she passed where one of her brothers slept as soundly as his sister Lena.

Before seven o'clock the two girls had left the house and turned in the direction of the village of Abbots Leigh. The freshness of the morning quickened their young footsteps, and Hilda sang snatches of song as she darted hither and thither to gather some stray hyacinth, left of the May-time, and straggling boughs of hawthorn, for May had only melted into June a few days before.

The two girls sat down at last on the trunk of a fallen tree, and Hilda decorated her hat with leaves and flowers; while Beatrice sat with folded hands, looking out across the gorge to the great gray rocks, streaked with a wide band of red, and shining in the light.

"Beatrice," Hilda asked at last, "what are you thinking about? You are always thinking; I wish you would talk more. Do you know, Beatrice, you have lived with us for a whole year—for you came on the

first of June—and yet, though we all like you and some of us love you, we do not know you. Even I don't know you."

Beatrice turned her grave sweet eyes on her little cousin, and said:

"My life, before I came to you, was a sad one, sad with a sadness I do not like to put into words; I try to forget it, and live every day as it comes, thankfully, that the present is not what the past was."

"You do not alter your black dress at all. I heard mother say the other day that your mother had been dead more than a year, and she wished—"

"Oh, Hilda, don't!" Beatrice exclaimed. "I cannot, cannot bear it. Let us talk of something else."

"Poor Beatrice," Hilda said, nestling close to her cousin; "I won't ask any more questions, if you will tell me one thing: is Uncle Maurice alive?"

"Yes—"

Then there was another silence, and the

capituous path, which, winding up from the middle road or path, runs through the Nightingale Valley.

"Take care, Hilda!" But Hilda only jumped down the quicker, and reached the face—which was really all that could be seen—except one dirty, grimy, little hand which was clutching the bough of a tree for support.

"Here, catch hold of my hand," Hilda said, "and I will soon pull you up. Now then," and in another minute the face was found to belong to the body of a boy of some indescribable age. For little waifs and strays, who are prematurely old in the ways of the world, which is commonly a hard world to them, do not show their age by rosy lips and round cheeks, or the clear depth of innocent eyes.

Nothing could be less in harmony with the early summer morning than this little pinched, wise, tan-colored face at the top of a mass of nondescript clothing which most

It was impossible to resist an answering laugh but Beatrice checked herself, and stooping over held out the handle of her large sun-shade, and said—

"Help yourself with this, Hilda, and take care."

At last both Hilda and the boy stood by the side of Beatrice on the grassy plateau, and Hilda threw herself down exhausted, while the boy without a word, was scuttling off into the woods behind them.

"I say," Hilda exclaimed, "have you nothing to say to me for helping you? After all, I believe you are a scarecrow and not a boy."

The boy or scarecrow would certainly have disappeared in another minute, had not Beatrice overtaken him, and putting her hand kindly on his shoulder, said—

"Do not go away, without telling us who you are, and if we can help you."

The little pinched face puckered up into a variety of lines and wrinkles, and Beatrice did not know whether these were preparatory to laughing or crying. It proved to be the former, for a little cackling sound, unlike the music of childish laughter, was accompanied by the words—

"My! you are a joke."

"Why am I a joke?" Beatrice asked, with a smile.

"Cause you bothers about me. Why should you?"

"Well, it is only natural! I should bother about you. You cried out for help, and that young lady climbed down the steep bank to help you. Neither she nor I would like you to go away and know no more about you. Where do you live?"

"In Chap's Court, down in Bristol, close against the Cut."

"Who do you live with?"

"Grannie. I came to look out for lilies to sell to Mrs. Bull, and as I was climbing up I rolled back, and lost the old basket, and the flowers, and my cap and everything."

"And are you going home now?" Beatrice asked. She had a purse in her hand with a little silver clasp, and she opened it and looked in all the pockets, while Kit's eye followed every movement.

"No," she said at last, "I have not even a penny to give you, or I would do so. But, Kit, I shall not forget you, and I hope you will be a good boy."

The little odd face was turned up to the grave sweet one as if asking,

"What is it to be good?"

Then he made a funny grimace, and said:

"I've been to church, I have, and heard 'em sing."

"I am so glad. What did they sing?"

"Don't know; summat about the bluesky."

"Ah! and the Friend for the children who lives there," said Beatrice, "who loves Kit—Jesus the Lord."

Kit's astonishment seemed boundless: "Loves me!"

"Yes, Kit, He loves everything but lies, and bad words, and cheating, and He hates them." Kit looked doubtful, and now Hilda joined them, saying, "Come back to-morrow, and we will be here, and then we'll give you a new basket, and you can get some more lilies. Only don't expect me to tear my dress again for a child who can't say thank you."

(To be Continued.)

TOTAL ABSTINENCE.

Total abstinence never destroyed a home, blighted a wife or cursed a child.

Total abstinence never robbed a man of character, manliness or integrity.

Total abstinence never filled a gaol or an almshouse.

Total abstinence never led a pure life into vice, nor blackened a pure heart with shame.

Total abstinence never filled the land with wailing nor its households with want.

Drinking habits destroy, blight and curse. Drinking habits rob and impoverish.

Drinking habits lead into vice and shame. Which is better—total abstinence or moderate drinking?

LET OUR LIVES be pure as snow-fields where our footsteps leave a mark, but not a stain.



DRAWING LESSON.

girls were so still that a little brown rabbit sat erect close by, and looked at them askance with its bright eyes, and did not seem afraid.

"It is time we went home now," Beatrice said at last, "though I should not mind staying here all day, if we had a kettle to boil, and some tea, and— Hark, Hilda, what noise is that?"

"Some one crying—some one hurt!" Hilda exclaimed, springing up, and looking down over the edge of the plateau where they were seated.

"I cannot see any one; but let us call, perhaps there will be an answer."

"What is the matter?" Beatrice said, in a clear, ringing voice, and then there was a sound of scrambling and struggling just below, and a very rueful face appeared through some thick branches of maples and a voice said:

"I have fallen down, and my basket full of lilies is rolled away, and—"

In a moment Hilda had sprung down the first steep ledge of rock to the top of a pre-

completely concealed any form or outline. Everything was too big for the wearer. The boots were odd ones, but both far too long for the feet which were encased in them, so that they turned up, Chinese-like at the toes.

The trousers were very big and loose, and hung in a fringe over the little thin legs, which peeped through innumerable rents. Above these was a waistcoat, held together by one big button, and a shirt-sleeve of striped blue cotton, puffed out like a balloon, on one arm, while the other was naked to the shoulder, where a suspicion of blue stripe told that the shirt had once possessed two sleeves. If a hat had been set on the lanky thin hair which covered the oblong shaped head, it had gone the way of the basket, and was no more seen.

"Come," Hilda said, "help yourself to climb up to the place where that young lady stands," pointing to Beatrice, and then she burst into a merry laugh, as she said—

"Did you ever see such a little scarecrow, Bee?"