

## Childrens' Department

LADDIE.

CHAPTER III.—Continued.

"'Tis mighty fine!" she said, "but an unked place to my mind; like a church-yard somat."

Her bed-room did not look "unked," however, with a bright fire burning, and the inviting chintz-curtained bed and the crisp muslin-covered toilet-table, with two candles lighted. In the large looking-glass on the toilet-table the figure of the little old woman was reflected among the elegant comfort of the room, looking all the more small and shabby, and old, and out of place in contrast with her surroundings.

"Now make haste to bed, there's a good old mother; my room is next to this if you want anything, and I shall soon come up to bed. I hope you'll be very comfortable. Good night."

And then he left her with a kiss, and she stood for some minutes quite still, looking at the scene reflected in the glass before her, peering curiously and attentively at it.

"And so Laddie is ashamed of his old mother," she said softly, with a little sigh; "and it ain't no wonder!"

As Dr. Carter sat down in his consulting-room by himself, he told himself that he had done wisely, though he had felt and inflicted pain, and still felt very sore and ruffled. But it was wisest, and practically kindest and best for her in the end, more surely for her happiness and comfort; so there was no need to regret it, or for that tiresome little feeling in one corner of his heart that seemed almost like remorse. This is no story-book world of chivalry, romance, and poetry, and to get on in it you must just lay aside sentimental fancies and act by the light of reason and common sense.

And then he settled down to arrange the details of to-morrow's plans, and jotted down on a piece of paper a few memoranda of suitable places, times of trains, &c., and resolved that he would spare no pains or expense in making her thoroughly comfortable. He even wrote a note or two to put off some appointments, and felt quite gratified with the idea that he was sacrificing something on his mother's account. The clock struck two as he rose to go up to bed, and he went up feeling much more composed and satisfied with himself, having pretty successfully argued and reasoned down his troublesome, morbid misgivings. He listened at his mother's door; but all was quiet, and he made haste into bed himself, feeling he had gone through a good deal that day.

He was just turning over to sleep when his door opened softly and his mother came in—such a queer, funny, old figure, with a shawl wrapped round her and a very large nightcap on—one of the old-fashioned sort, with very broad, flapping frills. She had a candle in her hand, and set it down on the table by his bed. He jumped up as she came in.

"Why, mother, what's the matter? Not in bed? Are you ill?"

"There, there! lie down; there ain't nothing wrong. But I've been listening for ye this long time. 'Tis fifteen year and more since I tucked you up in bed, and you used to say as you never slept so sweet when I didn't do it."

She made him lie down, and smoothed his pillow, and brushed his hair off his forehead, and tucked the clothes round him, and kissed him as she spoke.

"And I thought as I'd like to do it for you once more. Good-night, Laddie, good-night."

And then she went away quickly, and did not hear him call "Mother! oh, mother!" after her, for the carefully tucked-in clothes were flung off and Laddie was out of bed, with his hand on the handle of the door, and then—second thoughts being cooler, if not better—"she had better sleep," Dr. Carter said, and got back into bed.

But sleep did not come at his call; he tossed about feverishly and restlessly, with his mind tossing hither and thither as much as his body, the strong wind of his pride and will blowing against the running tide of his love and conscience, and making a rough sea between them, which would not allow of any repose. And which of them was the strongest? After long and fierce debate with himself he came to a conclusion which at all events brought peace along with it. "Come what may," he said, "I will keep my mother with me, let people say or think what they will; even if it costs me Violet herself, as most likely it will. I can't turn my mother out in her old age, so there's an end of it." And there and then he went to sleep.

It must have been soon after this that he woke with a start, with a sound in his ears like the shutting of the street door. It was still quite dark, night to Londoners, morning to country people, who were already going to their work and labour, and Dr. Carter turned himself over and went to sleep again, saying, "It was my fancy or a dream," while his old mother stood shivering in the cold November morning outside his door, murmuring,

"I'll never be a shame to my boy, my Laddie; God bless him!"

To be continued.

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## THE FOX AND HUNTSMAN.

In a warm land of the East, a fox with a coat of beautiful fur had caught the eye of a covetous huntsman. The huntsman thought, if he could only take that fox, what a fine price he might get for the creature's skin. After watching from day to day for a long time, he at last found the hole where the fox made his home, and determined to set a trap to secure his prize.

He dug a pitfall not far from the fox's hole, and covered it carefully first with slender sticks, which would bear no great weight, then he spread earth over the sticks, that the place might seem like the rest of the ground, and then gently laid a dead hare on the top of the whole, as a bait for the fox.

When the fox, as usual, came out of his hole to look for food, he was drawn toward the trap by the scent of the hare. He was very hungry, and was strongly tempted to seize on the quiet animal for a meal. But when he examined more carefully, he saw that the hare was dead, and began to suspect some trick; for he thought that no wild beast would be so good as to kill a hare and leave it there for him to eat.

"No, no," said he, "when there are two ways before you, never follow the way of danger. I am in a strait between two evils. I am terribly hungry, to be sure, but my hunger may be cured by catching something safely for myself: while if I fall into a trap, I may never get out again alive." So he resolved to resist the temptation, and take his chance of picking up a meal somewhere else.

The scene of our story lay, as we said, in a warm land of the East. Tigers lived there, as well as foxes and hares. And not long after our cunning friend, the fox, had escaped the snare, a strong, fierce tiger, prowling for food, came by, and, seeing the hare, he rushed forward and leaped headlong upon the dainty bait, and down he fell with a crash through the light earth and covering of sticks into the pit.

Meanwhile, the huntsman was hid out of sight in a tree near by, waiting to know the result of his plan. He was rejoiced when he heard the breaking of sticks and fall of the beast. Now thought he, I have secured the fox with the beautiful fur. So down he came from his hiding-place, and hastened to the pit, and without waiting or thinking jumped into it at once. But, wretched huntsman!—instead of seizing the fox for a prey, he himself was torn to pieces by the furious tiger.

We see that the fox chose rather to go hungry than run the risk of harm or death. He is like a wise boy or girl, who resists temptation to evil, and so escapes the pain that follows sin. But the huntsman was so greedy of gain that he jumped without looking into the pit, and was quickly killed by the tiger. And he is like a boy or girl lured on to wrong by hope of pleasure, or seizing on indulgence with a careless haste, and paying the penalty by life-long sorrow or by the death of the soul.

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## A CHILD'S FAITH.

An intelligent and sparkling-eyed boy of ten summers sat upon the steps of his father's dwelling, deeply absorbed with a highly embellished and pernicious book, cal-

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culated to poison and deprave the young mind. His father approaching, at a glance discovered the character of the book. "George, what have you there?" The little fellow, looking up with a confused air, as though his young mind had already been tainted with tales of romance and fiction, promptly gave the author of his dangerous companion. The father remonstrated, and pointed out to him the dangers of reading such books; and having some confidence in the effect of early culture upon the mind of his child, left him with the book closed by his side. In a few moments the father discovered a light in an adjoining room, and on inquiring the cause, it was ascertained that the little fellow had consigned the pernicious book to the flames.

"My son, what have you done?"

"Burnt that book, papa."

"How came you to do that, George?"

"Because, papa, I believed you knew better than I what was for my good."

"But would it not have been better to save the leaves for other purposes, rather than destroy them?"

"Papa, might not others have read and been injured by them?"

Here is a three-fold act of faith—a trust in his father's word, evinc-