

IN THE TREE-TOP.

BY LUCY LARCOM.

"Pock-a-by baby, up in the tree-top!"

Mother his blanket is spinning;
And a light little rustle that never will stop,
Breezes and boughs are beginning.
Rock-a-by, baby, swinging so high!
Rock-a-by!

"When the wind blows, then the cradle will rock."

Flush! now it stirs in the bushes;
Now with a whisper, a flutter of talk,
Baby and hammock it pushes.
Rock-a-by, baby! shut, pretty eye!
Rock-a-by!

"Rock with the boughs, rock-a-by, baby, dear!"
Laf-tongues are singing and saying;
Mother she listens, and sister is near,
Under the tree softly playing.
Rock-a-by, baby! mother's close by!
Rock-a-by!

Weave him a beautiful dream, little breeze!
Little leaves, nestle around him!
He will remember the song of the trees,
When age with silver has crowned him.
Rocky-a-by, baby! wake by-and-by!
Rock-a-by!

"P'TIT LULU."

BY THEO. GIFT.

She was a Jersey princess, and her throne was a low bit of broken wall outside the cottage-door, whence she used to nod her curly head to the passers-by, and call out, "Dood-bye, m'sieurs," in her broken English and shrill baby-treble.

It is thus I see her first—a bright spot of color against the warm red-brown background of earth and wall, and the arch of spotless blue above—a dab of carmine, patched with yellow about the head, a torn print garment—once white—and two dusty, dimpled, rose-pink legs, the little fat toes clinging like a monkey's to the rough lichen-encrusted inequalities on the side of the wall.

"Good-bye, little one. This is the right way down to Rozel Bay, is it not?"

"Mais oui, oui. A bas la. Lulu come down. Lulu show m'sieur."

The dab of color jumps down. Two short pud of fingers reach up into mine, and I am provided with a guide on the spur of the moment.

"Lulu, Lulu!" cries a voice from the cottage, "ou vas-tu, méchant? Viens donc de suite, p'tit chat!"

Lulu, I grieve to see, is not of an obedient disposition. She stamps one pink foot in the sandy soil, shakes her yellow head defiantly, and retorts in a shrill gabble, which sounds something like this—"V'eduire m'sieur/basvoirl' dat."

I am free to confess that my knowledge of Jersey-French is not equal to a translation.

I find myself in the unpleasant position of an involuntary child-stealer. To my relief, the half-door of the cottage opens, and there comes out a tall, ripe, brown-skinned girl of seventeen, with eyes black and shining as sloe-berries after a shower, and neat, pretty Jersey features smiling under the great white sun-bonnet, turned back like the cup of a huge convolvulus. To her I appeal, laboring with solemn British desperation after my long-forgotten foreign exercises, "Mademoiselle, cette—petite—enfant—a voulu—"

The pretty red lips curved upwards in a ready smile.

"Ah, yes, m'sieur, it is Lulu's way." (She evidently does not think much of my French, for she answers in English.) "So many excursion people come this way to see our baby and the gardens of La Chaire above, that la petite has taken the habit to play at guide. M'sieur will please excuse. The neighbors do so spoil the child, she grows troublesome. — F! done, Lulu!"

"Lulu not trouble. Lulu ben sage," stammers the baby-sinner, stamping a small srocco in her wrath, and holding tightly to my finger the while; then changing her key with the agility of a vocal acrobat, and turning two suddenly moist blue saucers of appeal on me, she whispers coaxingly, "Lulu only want show de chemin. Let p'tit Lulugo, hein?"

Naturally, Lulu is permitted to go. It is evident that this young princess is deeply versed in the arts of cajolery—a person not to be denied anything within the compass of human possibility.

The black-eyed damsel and I exchange glances of intelligence, and succumb simultaneously. Lulu tightens her pull on the finger she has captured, and leads me off, pattering in shrill triumph through the dust, and along the steep, narrow path which leads onwards and downwards to the rock-girdled beach of Rozel Bay. By-and-by we have to step out of the way; an excursion car is bearing down upon us, creaking and swaying as the heavy load of gaudily-dressed, blousy-faced British tourists, and neat, sallow-skinned Parisians, all of the bourgeois class, but different as beings from two distant spheres, presses forward on the straining, staggering horses, and grates against the side of the hill. Not wishing to immolate myself, an involuntary victim, beneath the wheels of this descending juggernaut, I retire to a clump of ferns and brambles on the outer edge of the path, clutching Lulu's fat wrist tightly, and horribly afraid lest that impetuous young lady

should choose to rush forward and be crushed on the road, or roll backwards and be shattered on the beach. The result seems equal.

I am a nervous man, and grow hot and damp all over with anxiety. Lulu, on the other hand, is as cool as a cucumber. She holds me, indeed, but as cool as a conquering Delaware would his captive Mingo, or a stern aunt her refractory nephew. She nods her charming head familiarly to the driver (an unmistakable Paddy), smiles upon him with all the sweetness those round blue eyes can bestow, and hails him with condescending urbanity.

"Hi, Malone! bo'zour, bo'zour!"
The driver's face expands into a grin; he waves his hand cheerfully.

"Good mornin' to ye, p'tit' Lulu; is it afther a ride yer wantin' the day, me lady?"

It is possible that Lulu may have stooped to such an idea on previous occasions, though at present she looks on it in the light of an insult. With great skill, however, she pretends not to hear, and addresses herself patronisingly to the dusty, steaming excursionists.

"Dood-bye, m'sieurs et mesdames. Malone go show you Rozel Bay. Lulu auss! Lulu got son m'sieur. V'la done!"

This last in a tone and with a wave of the unoccupied dimpled fist which draw instant and general attention on the captive Mingo. Lulu is satisfied. The car rolls on, and we follow. The cloud of dust is in our eyes; the red faces, copper-colored silk gowns, and hideous flowery hats of the path. We hear Malone cry, "There's Rozel!" for the benefit of his passengers. We too reach the corner. Lulu relinquishes her Mingo, folds her fat palms ecstatically, sets her fat legs as wide apart as is any way consistent with an upright position, and, copying Malone's tone with the nicety of a practised actress, repeats, "Zere's Rozel!" Then changing to a voice of glee, and beginning to jump up and down like a soft ball of wool tossed into the air and back again—"Lulu show it m'sieur—Lulu—no Malone!"

I stand still, and look about me—at the steep rough path with its overhanging wall of ochre-red earth, topped by a tangle of feathery grasses and matted white-veined ivy—at the broken, precipitous hill-side—the patches of golden gorse and flaming purple heather—at the motley red roofs and steep pebbly paths of the little fishing village nestled down in a nook between the dark green hills and the yellow strip of sandy shore—at the grey quadrangle of the garrison wall, with its living scarlet dots speckling the interior—at the broad, flashing sheet of burning blue water, beaming and dimpling like a breastplate of diamonds under the July sun—at the brown, weather-beaten fishing-boats hauled up high and dry upon the shingly beach, and far above at the grey roof of the wayside cottage blinking dimly in the yellow sunlight. It is so pretty a scene, so bright and picturesque, that I could have stood gazing for a length of time, but for Lulu. Taking my hand again, that insinuating tyrant remarks carelessly, as of a subject of general interest—

"Sweeties in de shop a bas. Berry dood sweeties."

"Ha, indeed? And Lulu would like some?"

"Mais oui!"—with most serious gravity—"m'sieur have some too."

Monsieur accedes, seeing it is expected of him and together we descend to the village. Lulu plots the way with surprising agility to the "sweetie" shop, and I meekly invest in a small load of toffee, brandy-balls, comfits, etc., for my guide. She, however, has no idea of having them made into a mere parcel, but opens first one tiny palm to be filled and then another, clasping her short fingers firmly over their sticky contents. I meekly suggest her pinafore as an extra receptacle; but Lulu, looking at the holes therein, shakes her head decisively. Doubts of the propriety of utilising the only remaining garment occur to both of us, when Lulu solves the difficulty by suddenly throwing back her head, and opening a small red cavern fenced by two rows of wee white pearls. I fill it obediently, full—very full. Lulu nods contentedly, and then, speech being impossible, gives me one round cheek to kiss, and so trots away on her homeward route.

Poor little fat legs, how weary they must have grown before they reached the top of the hill! Standing on the beach twenty minutes later, I saw the wee white figure still toiling painfully upwards, and stooping every half-minute to pick up one of the sweeties which would escape from hands or mouth.

This was my first meeting with Lulu; but long before I left Jersey we had grown intimate friends. My acquaintance with the hospitable mistress of La Chaire, whose gardens cut out of the rock are the show-places of Rozel, brought me often to that pretty bay; and whether on foot or horseback, if I passed the cottage and called, "Where's p'tit' Lulu?" out flew the dimpled owner of that name, dancing for glee, and holding up her chubby hands to be taken by "le m'sieur qui m'a donné des sweeties."

Lulu lived with her grandmother—a hard-faced old dame, wearing the short stuff skirt, clumping shoes, and broad-winged snowy cap of Bretagne—who worked in the fields; and her pretty young aunt Manette. Father, grandfather, and uncle had all been lost, drowned in the sea, out fishing the night Lulu was born; and mother went before morning to seek them. The shock killed her, and left Lulu orphaned before she was an hour old; but the child lived and thrived.

All the neighbors round about pitied and made much of the helpless baby; the fishers in especial taking so warm an interest in her welfare that at three years old Mlle. Lulu was the

acknowledged pet of Rozel, and the ruling spirit in that lonely cottage on the hill-top.

Two years and a half had passed when accident again brought me to Jersey for my summer holiday; and as a matter of course one of my first excursions was to Rozel Bay, and my kind friend at La Chaire. I was on horseback, and the day was hot and thunderous, breaking every now and then into those sudden down-pours, those terrific sheets of rain for which the island is so disagreeably noted. Not having an umbrella, I was naturally desirous of getting to La Chaire before being caught in one of these waterspouts; yet as I neared the well-known house by the road-side, the remembrance of Lulu made me draw rein and slacken pace, looking out for a glimpse of my little friend, and calling her name aloud in hopes of seeing a pair of startled, joyous eyes flash out in answer.

Vain idea! There was no voice in reply, no rush of little feet, no round, bright face lifted up to kiss me. The house stood there, silent in the yellow, thunderous light, dust upon the grey walls, dust upon the closed windows, dust upon the untidy tufts of blood-red carnations straggling over the dry light soil outside the door. Never a sound from within; never a puff of smoke from the chimney. The place looked dark, dismal, and deserted, as though a curse had fallen on it; and wondering and disappointed, I rode down to the village, and put up my horse at the inn before going on to La Chaire.

There I inquired for my baby guide of former years. There, in the stable-yard, I learnt from the man who acted as groom what had happened to the happy cottage, and where its little queen had gone.

Lulu was dead!

"Monsieur remembers her aunt," the man said, "a pretty, dark girl, with cheeks like peaches, and velvet eyes. 'Douce Manette' the fishers called her; but for all her beautiful eyes they did not find her 'douce' to them. Le Bon Dieu knows how many lovers she had in the village here; but never a one got inside the cottage-room where Manette washed and sewed and kept care of Lulu while the grand-mère was away at work; never a one of them all till Philip Gordon, a private from the garrison there, found his way up the hill-path, and into Manette's wilful heart. Ah, Dieu! from that day all went wrong. Gordon was an idle, dissolute sort of fellow, and the grand-mère would have none of him. She found out that he spent every sou in folly as soon as it came; that his officers looked on him as a black sheep; and that, for aught his comrades knew, he might have a wife in every garrison town already. La grand-mère turned him out of the house the first time she caught him there, and forbade Manette to see or speak to him again. Manette disobeyed.

"One cannot judge these things, m'sieur, eh! Perhaps the grand-mère was over-harsh. Perhaps Gordon persuaded the girl that he was a victim to cruel calumny and injustice—ça passe Every time he could get leave in the day, when old Mère Le Brun was away, he used to come to the cottage; and Lulu, happy and important, kept guard as sentinel at the door while the lovers talked. We in the village knew it all; and when we saw p'tit' Lulu scrambling down the hill-path with one little hand grasping the neck of her pianofore, more than one of us guessed that Manette had tucked a scrap of paper in there with a message for her soldier lover. Lulu liked to be busy, you know, m'sieur; her little feet never tired of running errands for the folks she loved.

"One day the end of all this arrived.

"The regiment was ordered to leave Jersey abruptly; and Gordon with difficulty contrived to let Manette know that he would be with her by a certain time to say good-by, and make arrangements for their future. Behold! as if of malice, that very day Mère Le Brun had rheumatism, and would not go to work, or suffer Manette to leave her. Perhaps she suspected. Dieu sait. At any rate there she was, and there was Manette, wild, restless, miserable, and dreading every moment that Gordon would appear. At last an idea struck her. She called Lulu and bade her run down the path, meet her lover, and keep him away. Lulu went at once, the grand-mère saw the child scamper off and cried, "Come back, p'tit chat, it goes to rain hard! Come then, wicked one!"

"Hélas! you know Lulu. She was wilful, la petite, and she loved Manette more than the hard old grandmother. She ran on not heeding. It was a black, stormy day, like this, but worse. Great drops of rain began to fall; and Mère Le Brun, afraid for the child, bade Manette go and fetch her back. Figure to yourself how gladly her daughter obeyed! She flew off like a hare, her face all one rose of joy. Then I suppose la grand-mère suspected. She rose up and followed; and there, a little way from the path, all among the ferns and stones on the sharp slope of the hill, stood Gordon with Manette in his arms, and Lulu sitting on a point of rock beside them serene and smiling amid all the rain and storm.

"It all happened in one second.

"The girl saw her grandmother's threatening face over her lover's shoulder and started back. Gordon threw out his arm to keep her, and somehow, by accident, knocked p'tit Lulu off her rock by the jerk of his elbow. Then there came a great blaze of lightning and a rush of rain which frightened them all. They heard Lulu cry, and tried—all three—to save her as she fell, fell, rolling from rock to rock over the ferns and brambles. M'sieur, you are pale; you guess. It was quite useless. The old woman

was stiff; Gordon had to think of Manette lest she too should slip, and dash herself down. When they reached the bottom Lulu lay there upon the stones quite still and white, her little body all broken, her hands torn and bleeding. Dead, m'sieur? yes, stonedead. There was one cut on the little head, all among the yellow curls.

They buried her three days later. All the neighbours round came to see her laid in holy ground, la petite ange. There was not a dry eye, M'sieur can comprehend. But the regiment had gone before then, Gordon with it; and la grand-mère could not leave Manette, who lay ill of a fever in her bed.

"Pauvre fille! she did not die, but it was full five weeks before she could even sit at the cottage door again; and then her beauty was all gone; her skin yellow, her eyes dull, like an old, old woman. I do not think her brain was ever quite right after that; she would look so wanly at you and say, 'Lulu, Lulu,' over and over again, in a dull hopeless way; then cry out in great agony, or creep away to weep. I think she knew her folly and wrongdoing had killed the innocent lamb who loved her; and she could not live it down. Poor Manette! one day la grand-mère shut up her cottage and carried her away. She said the neighbors talked about them; and our poor are very proud, voyez-vous m'sieur. They went away to France all in a day; and since then the house is empty. There is no little face to laugh out at you; no child to take the place of p'tit' Lulu."

HOW I KILLED THE TAME STAG.

One day I went to some neighboring hills to kill a stag or two for a friend of mine, who, not being able to come up that season himself, had begged me to get him some good heads, if I could. I met his stalker, a relation of my friend the under forester, whom we will call Norman, and I had with me my own keeper, whom we will call John—no fool about a deer, a first rate shot with both gun and rifle, and about as pretty a fisherman as ever took rod in hand; it was worth while going all the way to see him fish the saddle cast on that beautiful river the Conon, in Ross-shire. The saddle cast on the Conon was a stumpy, short tree, which in floods was half covered with water, and the top of it was shaped like a saddle. To this, in high water you waded, and getting astride the tree, you commanded a very good cast. This was no easy matter; for if you hooked your fish, you could not kill him from your saddle, but had to descend and wade to shore again. I should like to see any one do it and not lose his fish. John never did. After the usual salutations, we proceeded to work, and had not gone far when we spied two or three hinds and a stag.

"Norman," said I, "we are in sight, for that stag is looking straight and steady down upon us."

"Impossible, sir! he can't; but at any rate we can get down to that rock (distant a few yards), and there he can't see us."

So behind this rock we rolled ourselves.

"He is moving down this way, master," says John.

"Very civil stag, indeed," said I, and I proceeded to load my rifle.

"You had best be quick about it, sir," says John again, "for he is coming straight down."

"What a very queer accommodating beast," I repeated; when, in a deep, tremulous voice, Norman groaned out—

"Ech, Lord! if it isna the tame stag!"

"Well, what's to be done?" was my question.

"Kill him," says Norman.

"I don't want to kill a tame stag; not so hard up for a shot as that; so take my rifle and kill him yourself."

"I would not lay a hand on him for any sake," was Norman's reply.

"Then do you shoot him, John."

"I would not like to try, sir; you know you have your own rifle to-day, stocked for yourself, and I can't shoot with it."

Here was a quandary.

"You had best be quick about it, sir," again said John, "for he is coming down sharp, and will be very near us directly."

"For any sake, don't miss him. Take time for any sake, and kill him dead!—the ill-fared beast!" groaned Norman again.

Now this was not pleasant. I am by no means a sure rifle-shot—on the contrary, a very bad one. The two men evidently thought the stag dangerous, and depended on me for protection. I had no stomach for the affair at all; but I thought it better to be a tailor than a cur. I had not much time for further consideration, for the stag appeared over the brow of the hill under which our rock was, and came right down on us. Thinks I to myself, for I have some Tipperary blood in my veins, if we are in for a scrimmage, it's not lying on my face and stomach I'll be, but standing on my feet. So I stood straight up. On came my friend, facing me, not giving me a chance of his side. I was determined, if he kept this position, not to fire till he was so close that I could shoot him through the neck and break his spine. At about twelve yards, I should say, he stood and turned his head, and eyed me a little askance. This gave me a chance, and I fired; and though, he did not drop dead, he was quite paralysed, and soon gave up the ghost. Great were the congratulations of my two companions, and great was my relief that no harm was done, though not quite content in my own mind with my exploit.