

THE CHILDREN'S PORTION.

THE BEETLE AND THE HONEY.

I have got a story to tell you, and then something to say about it. The story is this;—Once upon a time there was an eastern prince, eighteen years of age; and he offended the king to which his country was then subject. So the king took him, and shut him up in a very high tower, and gave orders that in three days he should be put to death. Now there was an Arab maid that loved him, and she went and sat at the foot of the high tower, trying in vain to find some way by which she could get in to him, or he could get out and be free. At last she went to an old Dervish, and told him, with many tears, that she could not find any way of saving her lover. The Dervish stroked his beard, and gave her a *black beetle* alive, and told her to observe his directions about it. So next morning about sunrise she came to the foot of the tower. The first thing she did was this: She fastened a very fine green silk thread round the middle of the beetle, and set him clinging with his feet on the wall of the tower, with his ugly head looking upwards. The second thing she did was this: she touched the nose of the beetle with a single drop of honey; and then she stepped back, and smoothed her hair off her face, and folded her arms before her, and watched what the beetle would do. Now, the first thing that happened to the beetle was this,—he smelt the honey. Then next, he began to think, (if black beetles do think), “I wonder where this honey can be. It is somewhere before me, I know. I wonder if I shall have to go far before I find it. But the least that I can do is to try.” So off he set, straight up the tower, literally following his nose, (and his nose, you remember, was turned to the top of the tower). He crawled slowly and steadily, and often stopped, much disappointed that he had not yet come to the honey. But as often as he stopped, the scent of the honey came fresh and strong to him again; so off again he went to reach it, dragging up after him all this time the fine green silk thread. And when he came about seven feet from the top, the prince, who had been looking over the top of the parapet with wild eyes, observed him. And he held his breath, and waited; and as soon as the beetle crawled up to the ledge of the parapet the prince with a trembling hand seized upon the green silk thread, and commenced to wind it up from the bottom of the tower. But the Arab maid had fastened it at the bottom to a very long cord; and he pulled that up by the thread; and with the cord he pulled up a stout rope; and with the rope he pulled up a capital ladder. And he made fast the ladder to the parapet, and so came down from the tower; and he and the Arab maid fled away together, and lived happily ever after; but what became of the poor black beetle no one knows.

Now that is the story; and you need not believe any more of it than you like. I do not believe a word of it. It is just an “Eastern story.” But what I wish to speak about in it is that deceived beetle. The poor