

## Jessie's Hyacinth.

Jessie Burns had several plants growing in pots on the window—a fuchsia, a heliotrope, a tea-rose, and a bridal daisy; but the most cherished of all was a hyacinth, which was in a beautiful purple vase. She had bought the bulb and the vase with her own money, at a seed store, in November, had filled the vase with pure water, a little warmed, then placed the bulb, which looked exactly like a little dried onion, in it, and set it in a south window, where it would catch the sunshine.

In a few days little white roots began to appear at the bottom of the bulb; these grew longer every day, till the vase was quite filled with the thread-like roots. Jessie changed the water once a week, but after a month's watching she began to grow impatient and to wonder why no green shoots showed themselves.

"It is a real stupid old thing!" she said one day. "I should think it would be ashamed to look so dry and ugly on the top when it has got such lots of roots! What are they good for, if it never puts out leaves and flowers? I have half a mind to throw it away; it isn't a bit pretty, and everybody said it would be so beautiful! Oh, dear! I wish I had spent my money for something else," and she was ready to cry with vexation.

"Be patient, my little daughter," said Mrs. Burns. "By-and-by it will send up a green shaft containing the flowers which will be both beautiful and fragrant."

But Jessie looked at it with pouting lips, and said she wished it would be quick about it then. She didn't believe it ever would; it was just as dry and brown as it was the day she got it.

Meantime the poor abused hyacinth was doing its very best. Within that homely covering wonderful processes were going on. Those thread-like roots absorbed and carried nourishment to the centre of the bulb, and its heart had grown warm with a mysterious life. Every fibre felt the strange thrill, and laid aside its torpor; every little cell, of which it had hundreds, had its work to do—not one was idle; and by their joint labour a little plant was in time completed, perfect in every part. Within a tiny green bud was packed away layer upon layer of tinted leaves of the most exquisite hue; and when all was ready, this tiny green bud was pushed up to light through a small opening at the top of the bulb.

"Oh, it's green, mother! it's green! It will grow now!" shouted Jessie, in an ecstasy of delight.

And grow it did. The bud parted into six broad green leaves, and among them lay nestled little flower-buds just tipped with pink. These gradually opened, till at length ten lovely blossoms hung like graceful little bells from the tall flower-stalk, filling the room with fragrance. Everybody admired it; everybody said, "What exquisite colour! what delicious perfume!" Jessie's little heart was overflowing with joy and gladness, and she exclaimed, "It wanted to have root before it had flowers; didn't it, mother?"

"Yes, dear; first roots, then leaves, then blossoms. Just so it is with fair and lovely heart-flowers; there must be a silent, unobserved growth down deep in the soul before we can see the beautiful blossoms on the surface, scattering fragrance and

blessedness all around them. We must be patient, and wait quietly for the seeds we plant to root." And as she stroked the soft curls back from her little daughter's brow, her heart grew warm with faith, and the sweet trust that many a fair plant was taking root in that young soul to bloom for evermore; though the time seemed long since some of the seeds were sown, and as yet no greenness or beauty showed, they were not perished.

"They will yet spring up and blossom, and bear fruit," said the hopeful mother; "and fill many hearts with joy and sunshine, and at last make glad the city of our God."

## The Great Eye.

When I was a little girl, and was sometimes left alone in the house, I used, I am now very sorry to say, to be in the habit of going to my mother's closets, and of taking, without leave, a little piece of cake or some of the nice sweetmeats there. This was certainly dishonest, a very naughty trick, and in the sight of God truly a sin.

There was one part of our cellar partitioned off from the rest, so that it made a very commodious closet. In this closet were always kept two large tin cake-boxes, which were generally filled with sweet and rich cakes; and on its shelves were arranged jars of East India and West India sweetmeats, along with some preserves of my mother's own make. My younger sister Anna and I would sometimes go together to that closet and help ourselves to a little of something dainty, though we knew that taking it without leave was very wicked.

My sister had one day been left alone in the house for some time, and I did not doubt that she had seized the opportunity to please her appetite by filching some of the goodies from the boxes kept in that cellar closet. At night, when we went to our little chamber, she said to me—"Carrie, I never mean to go down cellar to steal any more, for I think it is very wicked to steal; and, indeed, I am now afraid to go there."

"Why, it is not stealing, Anna," said I; "it is only taking. They are mamma's things, and by taking we don't steal mamma's things any more than if they were our own."

"Well," said sister Anna, looking very seriously at me, "I want to tell you all about it. This afternoon, you know, no one was in the house but myself, and I thought it was then a good chance to taste some of those little cakes that mother had made yesterday. So I went down into the cellar closet, and had just taken down one of the cake boxes, when I looked round, and there, right on the cellar-wall before me, was a great Eye looking at me; and I know it was God's eye seeing me. So I never mean to take anything more. Then, after I had shut up the cake-box, I ran upstairs, and there I knelt right down, and asked God to forgive me this great sin, for Jesus Christ's sake. I am sure that God is always looking at us when we go down into the cellar to taste of mamma's choice things; for you know that in the Psalms the Bible says of God that He 'shall neither slumber nor sleep.'"

Then sister Anna and I made a resolve to ask God to help us do better in time to come.

This account, little readers, is all true, and the thought of that "great Eye" did make a deep impression on

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me, as well as on my sister Anna. I do not think that either of us ever stole any more; though, as to myself, I remember thinking once afterwards that some sweetmeats would taste very nicely, and of going into the closet to get some, and that then the thought of the "great Eye" being upon me kept me back from touching any of the things that were there.

Little children, there is a GREAT EYE ever upon us—an Eye that never slumbers and never sleeps. Oh, that all, when they are tempted to sin, as my sister Anna did, could then feel that it is fixed upon them! My sister's conscience smote her, and it was this sense of her guilt which made her think she really saw a great eye looking on her then. She felt the truth, "Thou God seest me," when she knew that she was committing a sin against Him. Think of this truth, dear children—think that the eye of God is watching you ever with tender love and care, and that it also marks what you do amiss; and let both the love and the fear of that watchful Eye teach you, as it did my little sister, to be afraid to sin against God.

—Whom shall I ask what is meant by the forgiveness of sins? The proud Pharisee, who is toiling in his drudgery to earn an acceptance of God, knows it not. Nor has the man who has the terrors of a broken law dwelling on his conscience, and who has not yet beheld, with the eye of faith, a Saviour who casts out none. Even those who enjoy the closest walk with God as their Father have very inadequate ideas of what is meant by "the forgiveness of sins."

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