

The Story of a Bad Little Duck.

Tommy had the toothache. To be sure it was all his own fault, but that didn't lessen the pain one bit. Mamma had expressly told him not to go out of doors without his rubbers, and Tommy had meant to obey, but seeing two of the boys come down the street carrying a big kite between them he had forgotten everything else and darted after them. He did not think of rubber-shoes, or mamma's warning, till nearly night, when he felt a sharp twinge of pain, and came home to toss and groan, as only a small boy with toothache can. Vainly did mamma apply hot flat-irons, hot flannel laudanum, and every other remedy anybody ever thought of; the pain was obdurate; till mamma, wise woman that she was, resolved to try diversion. "Come here, Tommy, and I will tell you a story."

"Don't believe I can listen, it hurts so awful," sobbed Tommy. Nevertheless he came and climbed into her lap. Mamma began: Once upon a time there was a little duck. He was a proud little duck, and a greedy little duck, but his master, a little boy, loved him very dearly, and made him a nice house in the corner of the kitchen. The little boy called his duck Theophilus, and surely such a grand name was enough to make any duck feel proud and vain. Theophilus felt especially vain of himself when his master would make daisy chains for his neck, and feed him on cake crumbs, and stroke the soft down on his back.

"But by and by the little duck began to grow fat and saucy. He had a way of poking his flat yellow bill into everything. Cook declared that she had no peace in her life for that meddlesome duck, and she would drive him from the kitchen with much scolding and clatter. But no sooner would her back be turned than she would hear a gentle quack, and there would be Theophilus with his bright bead-like eyes fixed on her, and his bill in a pan of bread.

"Now, such things grieved the little boy very much, and he reproved and cautioned his pet; but I am sorry to say that the bad little duck did not mend his ways, but rather grew worse.

"The little boy had another pet beside Theophilus, and that was Brula. Now, Brula was a very good dog in her way; but she was a dog of dignity, and, besides, she was growing old and rheumatic; no wonder, then, that she regarded the young mischievous duckling with disfavor.

"Often when Brula was enjoying her afternoon nap, Theophilus would scramble up on her back and quack in her very ear, thereby breaking in upon her sweetest slumber. One day, as Brula was dozing in the sun, dreaming of her youth, and the fox-hunts she used to enjoy so much, she felt a sudden peck on her eyelid, and opening one eye she saw that impudent duckling standing in front of her, and reaching for a fly which had settled just above her left eyebrow. Now this was more than flesh and blood could stand, and Brula opened her great red mouth with its rows of white shiny teeth, and snapped the poor little duck's head right off."

"Oh!" said Tommy, starting up, and forgetting all about his misery in the interest of the story.

"And what did the little boy do, mamma?"

"Why, the little boy cried and cried, and took the body of poor Theophilus, and buried it under the lilac

bush. Brula seemed sorry, too, for she slunk under the table, and wouldn't come out again all day."

"But I don't feel so very sorry for the little duck, mamma, for he ought to have obeyed his little master; he was bad, after all."

"I don't know about that," said mamma, with a queer little smile. "You know, he was only a duck, and didn't know better; but when a boy who has sense and memory forgets and disobeys, and gets the toothache, why then—"

"Yes'm," said Tommy, meekly, and he settled down closer into mamma's arms, and lay quite still, thinking, for a long time.—*Philadelphia Presbyterian.*

The Beggar Boy.

In the following story the power of kindness is beautifully illustrated: 'Go away from there, you old beggar boy! You've no right to be looking at our flowers,' shouted a little fellow from the garden.

The poor boy, who was pale, dirty, and ragged, was leaning against the fence, admiring the splendid show of roses and tulips within. His face reddened with anger at the rude language, and he was about to answer defiantly, when a little girl sprang out from an arbour near, and looking at both, said to her brother—

'How could you speak so, Herbert! I'm sure his looking at the flowers don't hurt us.' And then, to soothe the wounded feelings of the stranger, she added: 'Little boy, I'll pick you some flowers if you'll wait a moment,' and she immediately gathered a pretty bouquet, and handed it through the fence.

His face brightened with surprise and pleasure, and he earnestly thanked her.

Twelve years after this occurrence, the girl had grown to a woman. One bright afternoon she was walking with her husband in the garden, when she observed a young man in workman's dress leaning over the fence, and looking attentively at her, and at the flowers. Turning to her husband, she said—

'It does me good to see people admiring the garden; I'll give that young man some of the flowers;' and, approaching him, she said, 'Are you fond of flowers, sir? It will give me great pleasure to gather you some.'

The young workman looked a moment into her fair face, and then said, in a voice, tremulous with feeling. 'Twelve years ago I stood here a ragged little beggar boy, and you showed me the same kindness. The bright flowers and your pleasant words made a new boy of me; ay, and they made a man of me too. Your face, madam, has been a light to me in my dark hours of life, and now, thank God, though that boy is still a humble, hardworking man, he is an honest and grateful one.'

Tears stood in the eyes of the lady as turning to her husband, she said, 'God put it into my young heart to do that little act of kindness, and see how great a reward it has brought.'

A Happy New Year.

This year will prove a happy one.

If gladdened by Thy smile;
Jesus, my Saviour, that alone
My heart with bliss can fill;
That smile can cheer the saddest hour,
And gild the darkest sky,
And, with its soul-refreshing power,
Joy e'en midst grief supply.

This year will prove a happy one

If quickened by Thy grace,
With swifter, firmer steps I run
The arduous, heavenly race;
If stumbling, lingering now no more,
"Forgetting things behind,"
I press toward those that are before
With undiverted mind.

This year will prove a happy one

If every moment lent,
Each day, each hour, with Thee begun,
For Thee alone be spent;
If, as the weeks revolve, my aim,
My one desire on earth may be,
On earth to glorify Thy name,
To live, my God, for Thee!

CHARLOTTE ELLIOTT.

