



THE FIELD MOUSE.

friend Madame le Comtesse de Fillac, who was seated in the carriage.

Madame de Fillac had known Mere Rose for years, and, wide as the breach of earthly rank was between them, there was, however, some bond in common that seemed to unite them. Besides the fact that both were Christians in more than name, they both kept to the old Huguenot faith that by early associations and many memories they held very dear.

"Mere Rose, where are the children?" asked Madame de Fillac.

"They are out still; if madame wishes, I can send for them," answered Mere Rose.

"Ah, no; I have not time to wait. Only, Mere Rose, I will tell you my errand.

I am going away for some months tomorrow—a long, long way for me, for I am no longer young—to England to see relatives of my husband, who are married there. Ah, Mere Rose, it is a shocking thought to cross the sea, which I have never done before, and to go to that land where there is perpetual fog! but I must not grumble. I wanted to give one of your children a gift on Easter Day, but I have made a different plan. You are to watch which of them is the most generous, and to the most generous one give this on Easter Day." So saying, the old lady gave Mere Rose a small packet firmly sealed up.

"But, madame, who is to decide? surely madame does not leave it to me?" exclaimed Mere Rose, forgetting any thanks in her astonishment.

"Yes; I leave it to you. You know the children better than I do; you can watch them and do as I say. True generosity is very rare, Mere Rose," said Madame de Fillac, sadly; "and I want at least that your children should endeavour to gain that virtue. You are not to tell them of it till after you have given it, remember. You are to judge by the ordinary course of their lives, for I won't have them doing it as if to gain anything." And after a little

more talk, Madame de Fillac said adieu, and Mere Rose returned to her knitting, after locking up the parcel in a large box where she kept her marriage certificate, some faded flowers, and relics of the husband and children who were gone.

Presently the children came bursting into the cottage, and Mere Rose tried not to look conscious of a "secret," as she listened to their eager words.

Clothilde, the eldest, who was fourteen, warmed her hands as she spoke; and Julie, who was a year younger, put in a word now and then. They were happy-looking children, with affectionate natures and right principles, founded upon the one foundation—faith in their Lord, and a desire to live for Him.

"Oh, and, Mere Rose," said Julie, when Clothilde paused to take breath in her account of an accident that had taken place that morning, that they had just heard of, "part of the wall fell on the little Tots, who was playing in the garden, and his arm is so hurt!"

"It is indeed terrible, *mes enfants*," said Mere Rose. "How did the wall happen to fall?"

"You see, they had been repairing it, Mere Rose, and the workmen were away at dinner. Laure was knitting near, when the wall fell, hurting her very much. She was unconscious when they found her, and the *pauvre petit* Tots has his little arm broken."

"Yes; and, Mere Rose," said Julie, it is so sad for poor Laure, for she is quite thrown out of work. She is so ill, and she will not be able to wash for a long time."

"We must see what can be done," answered Mere Rose.

(To be continued.)

THE FIELD MOUSE.

We hardly know whether this little fellow should be called one of the wild animals of Canada or not. He is an animal,

certainly; and he is wild enough, too, as any of you boys who have tried to catch him very well know. But he is such a little fellow, and such a comical chap besides, that it seems rather ridiculous to call him a "wild animal" just like a lion or a tiger.

He is the tiniest of creatures, the very smallest of all the four-footed things which run in our fields and forests,—only two inches and a quarter long without his tail; to be sure that is a very important part of him, being about the same length as his body, and he would be greatly at a loss without it. If you could manage to catch a couple of them, and put them into a pair of scales they would weigh just a half-penny together! The fur is about the colour of the squirrel's, and so soft and thick, it feels like a little brown velvet cushion.

You like to have some object in your walks; why don't you hunt for the field mouse? Down deep in the meadow grass or the corn-field furrows you will find it; these are its haunts, and it would give you rather an exciting occupation, because the game is so small, and your eyes must be so sharp. Small, however, as it is, it is as clever in its way as an elephant. If, while you are searching for it, you happen to hit upon a nut with a round hole in it and all the kernel gone, you may be quite sure the Field Mouse has been over the ground before you, and that this has been the work of its little nibbling teeth. The squirrel likes nuts, but he holds one in his fore-paw and then cracks it down in two equal parts; so does the Nuthatch, but he pecks a ragged hole with a sharp beak which has been given him on purpose, while the little Field Mouse bores a hole as round and neat as you could do it with a gimlet. So that even an empty nut can tell its own story and make its history good, and as truly as if it had a tongue to speak it. So wonderful is Nature!

When the winter draws near, the wise little Field Mouse determines it

will have nothing to do with it, so it burrows in the ground, and lines the hole with soft grass, or else it creeps into the farmer's ricks, which is better still. In either case it goes fast asleep, and there it lies safe and snug till the spring time. It knows no more about frost and snow, and the bare country fields, than the nightingale or the swallow.

Tiny little Field Mouse! How tenderly you have been taken thought for! The great things in the world would almost seem as if they could take care of themselves, but the wee ones want to be specially provided for; and so they are. God has made a little work in this world for the Field Mouse, and then fitted it in and provided for all its needs. Then he sends us to it to learn from it such lessons of love and trust towards Him for ourselves.

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