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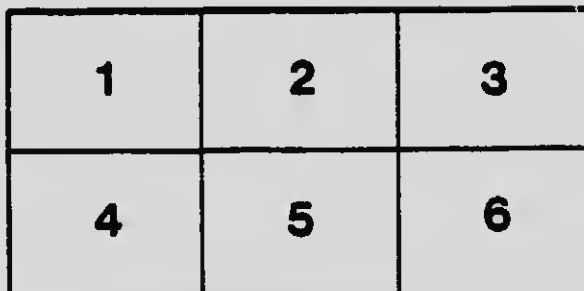
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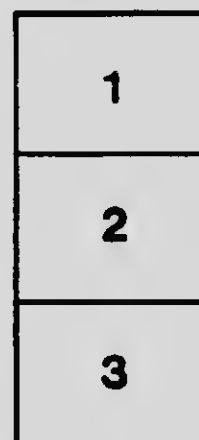
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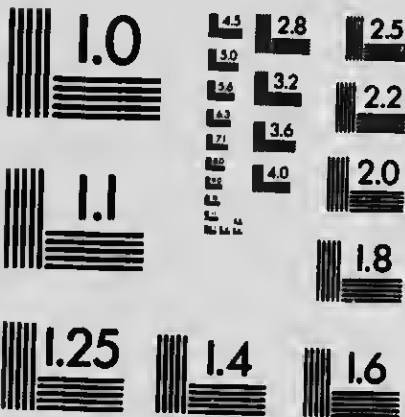
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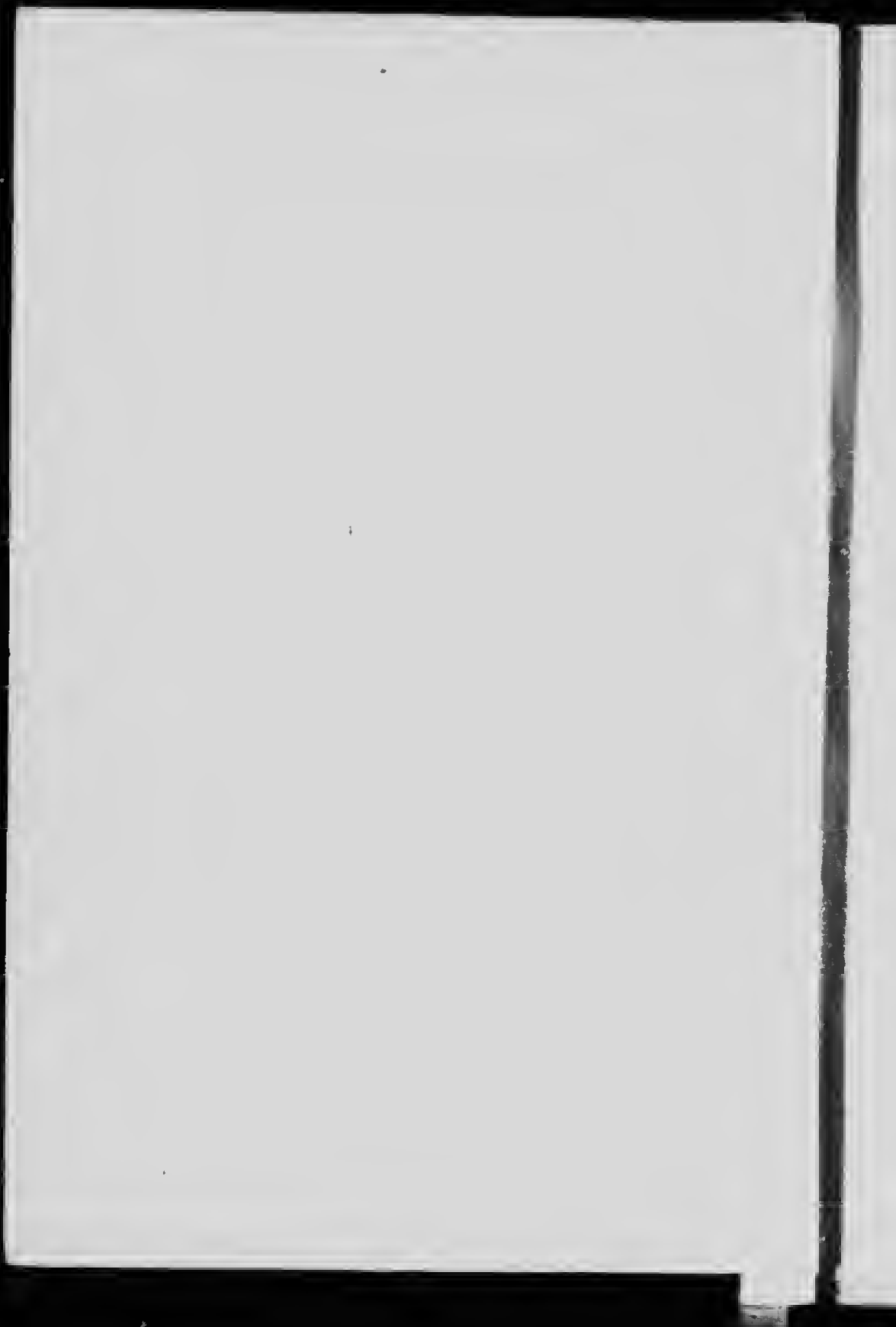
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# ENA

BY

FRANCES E. HERRING

*Author of Canadian Camp Life ; Among the People of  
British Columbia ; In the Pathless West, etc., etc., etc.*

LONDON

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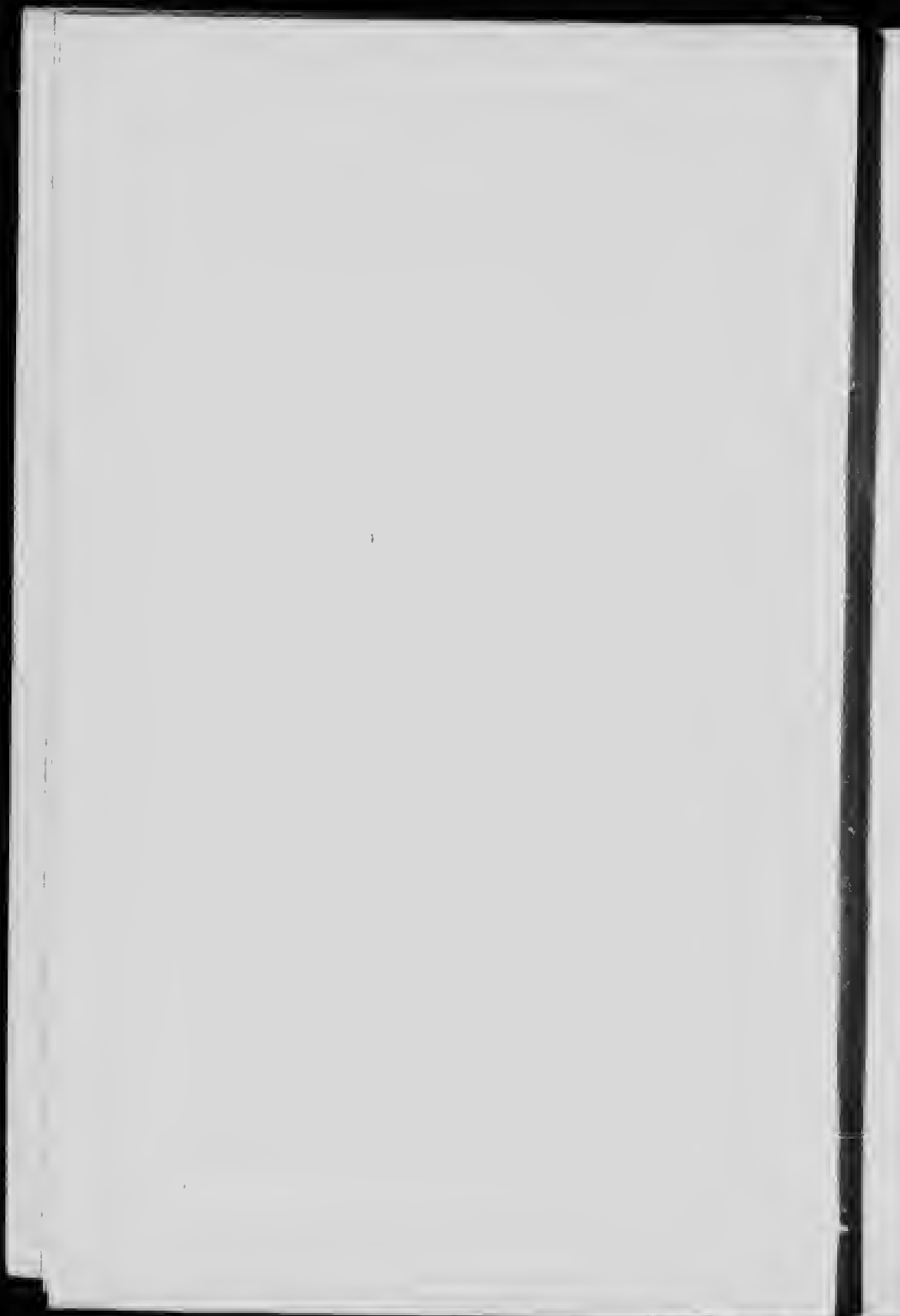
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Very sincerely yours,

FRANCES E. HERRING.

(Mrs. A. M. HERRING.)



## CHAPTER I

### 'IN THE HOUR OF DEATH'

'WAKE and come quick! Miss Ena! Miss Ena!' called a sturdy maid-of-all-work, as she vigorously shook a little girl of nine, adding in an awe-stricken whisper, 'you're father's a dyin', wake up and come quick!'

It was a chilly morning early in May, and the child shivered as her clothes were hastily put on, and she was hurried by the maid into 'Daddy's' room. He was propped up with pillows, and the grandmother, with her healthy, rosy face bathed in tears, stood near him, soothing as best she could his last moments, and trying vainly to understand the dying injunctions, he strove too late, to give.

Her mother stood at the foot of the great lumbering, handsomely carved, 'four post' bedstead, almost hidden by its heavy hangings of dark grey merino. She was crying weakly, quietly; hardly realising that it was the end of John, and his kindly, unselfish care of her and the little ones. But as her mother closed the eyes of the man, and the poor wife felt that all was over, she broke out hysterically, calling upon him to come back,

## ENA

and not leave her to bear the burden alone. 'How can I manage things, how can I: how can I?' she moaned.

There was a loud wailing from a cot near, and Grandma took up a dark, wiry mite of a baby girl, some two months old, and tried to make her daughter take an interest in it, but to no purpose. So the dear old lady wrapped it in a warm woollen shawl, carried it downstairs, and after feeding it, gave it to Betty to hold. The girl sat in the wide chimney corner, watching the old lady, as she bustled about, giving Gent orders to take the wagonette to Granston, some nine miles distant, bring back old 'Nurse' who had only left a few days before, and, 'tell the doctor your Master is dead,' she said to the old man. 'Here child, get your things and go with him,' she called to Ena, 'you can show him where Nurse lives.'

Ena did as she was told, climbed into the wagonette half-dressed as she was, and sat shivering by the old man, on their long drive to Granston.

Arrived there, she knew the small street which turned off from the main thoroughfare where 'nurse' lived, and showed it accordingly; but as to which house she occupied in the row of monotonous little brick tenements, was another matter altogether.

When Gent rattled and rapped here and there and asked for 'Nuss,' he was asked sharply, 'Nuss who?' but as neither could tell the woman's name, the doors were slammed in their faces; people didn't like to be disturbed while dressing their children,

## ENA

or taken from the hurried preparation of breakfast. Ena had known the old dame since she could remember anything, had always called her 'Nurse,'; and it never occurred to the Grandma that neither she nor Gent knew the woman's name.

'Oh!' burst out the child, as a hard-featured woman was again closing the door upon them, 'Can't you tell us where Nurse lives, Daddy is dead, and Mamma is crying, we do want Nurse so bad!'

The woman paused and thought a minute, for the misery in the child's face touched her. 'Hev she a hump-backed sister, as keeps a little schule?'

'Oh! yes, just for small children,' answered Ena eagerly.

'Then it's Miss Bullen as you want, she lives two doors down, on t'other side, that's her now,' and she pointed over the way. But Ena stopped to hear no more, she jumped down and running across the street threw her arms round the old lady's neck, as she caught her up in a motherly embrace.

The woman watched the little scene, as she said to herself, 'Swæpin' her yard indeed, this time o' morin,' mighty perticular! gits all them idees goin' a nussin'; ef she'd a hed half-a-dozen children herself, she'd a found it diffe'nt,' and she returned to her helter-skelter kitchen, and unkempt youngsters, satisfied that hers was the only right way.

Nurse knew something was wrong, or Gent would scarcely be there so early, and her thoughts flew to 'Missus,' and the baby she had left doing so well

## ENA

only a week or ten days ago. She waited for Ena to speak. 'Daddy is dead, come home with us quick, Nurse!' she sobbed, breaking down now her errand was accomplished. The good woman saw how cold and pinched the child looked, and her kindly little deformed sister bustled about and got them breakfast. While they ate it, she put a few things together for Nurse, and Gent went with his message to the Doctor.

The three were soon on their way back, as fast as 'Joggy' the good stout pony could take them. Poor Mrs Hetherington had laughingly given him that name on account of his easy jog-trot pace.

The events of that morning always remained vividly in Ena's memory, even the feeling that she was doing wrong to stop for breakfast, whilst Daddy was waiting to be 'laid out.' She was sent later in the day to the village shop for more flannel for the shroud, and she remembered how the shopman had questioned her as to her father's rather sudden death, and the curious glances of the people there had turned to pity, when unable to answer them, she had laid her head against the high counter and cried in childish grief.

Mr Hetherington had been in business in Granston, but his health gave way, and he was not equal to the strain it imposed upon him; so, as he had lately come into a few acres of land, the old homestead, and a little money, he resolved to leave the town life, and try what the country air, and out-door occupations could do for him. His wife had never liked the idea, the very name of 'the country' suggesting loneliness;

## ENA

besides, she left behind her all the friends and acquaintances of her life.

Mr Hetherington had put some sheep and lambs into the house orchard, and it was in looking after them he took a severe cold, which resulted in inflammation, and his rather sudden death.



## CHAPTER II

THEY lived near the church, so no hearse or vehicle was used at the funeral, but eight sturdy yeomen bore him upon their shoulders, four carrying, and four walking alongside, relieving each other at intervals.

The mourners followed, first the two little boys hand in hand, then the widow and her mother, then Ena and Hattie, a child of six years. After them came relatives and friends, according to their degree of relationship, male taking precedence of female relatives: walking silently along the middle of the muddy road, a dismal procession. The rain, meanwhile, poured in gusty torrents, whilst the chill east wind searched through their very bones, and blew their sombre garments about in wild confusion.

The cortege was met at the white fence of the churchyard by the aged clergyman, his snowy locks streaming, and his sonorous voice sounding so large in comparison to his small and shrunken body, as he read the comforting words of the Burial Service, walking ahead of the coffin, into the church, which held inscriptions as far back as the thirteenth century.

After the last rites had been performed they all returned to the house, and cake and wine were handed

## ENA

round, as they sat in solemn circle, ranged round the walls of the parlour. Then another small tray was handed round to the bearers, containing eight little parcels of money : they each took one and went their several ways, leaving the relatives waiting to hear the will read. The family lawyer was there, but he said no will had been executed to his knowledge ; and, as the small estate was entailed, it would revert to the eldest son when he came of age.

Grandma grumbled at the injustice of this, and the relatives went away disappointed. They seemed to have come more to hear the will read, than for any love of the dead man, although of course, in the face of the widow and children, they could have expected nothing for themselves.

Mrs Hetherington seemed utterly unable to rouse herself to anything like action, and the grandmother, Mrs Howel, did her best to control and care for the children. She found it tiresome work, however, as she had had but the one daughter herself, who, with neither brother nor sister to lead her into mischief was easily managed.

When she tried to assert herself with the two boys they would scamper out of the house, climb the tall poplar trees that surrounded the place, and sit, masters of the situation ; till, in dread of their falling and hurting or even killing themselves, she would bribe them with some nuts or figs to come down, which they would do when enough to satisfy them was offered.

The eldest boy, John, after his father (there had been

## ENA

an eldest son John in the family for at least four generations) was a handsome boy of ten, square built and lissome, tall for his age, and of that fair, red and white, Saxon type, so pleasant to the eye.

The second boy, Sam, was small and very dark, of a nervous and irritable disposition, but withal a good honest heart. He was made to fetch and carry for his elder brother, who was heard to remark to him with a masterful air, 'If you don't do what I tell you, I shall kick you out when I'm a man, 'cause this 'll all be mine, then what'll you do?' Sam wondered himself what he would do, forgetting he would be a man by the time his brother was.

The 'all' was a very small estate, which had dwindled down from generation to generation, till only enough was left with care and economy, to bring up this family of five.

After the death of Mr Hetherington's mother, an old lady of ninety-seven, certain repairs had been needed in the old house, and a sum of £90 had been expended on these, which had been duly paid by the late Mr Hetherington; his wife, with a childish pleasure at handling so much money at once, counted it out for him, and had seen him off with it. When he returned he looked for his receipt, but found he had lost it, and remarked to her 'Why, Esther, I've lost the receipt for that money, I must get another from Reed next time I go to town.' His sudden illness prevented his doing so, and Mrs Hetherington had thought no more about it, till one afternoon, Reed himself was shown into the

## ENA

parlour, bowing and smiling in an obsequious way he had, when he presented this same bill over again. Mrs Hetherington explained about her husband taking the money to him, and the losing of the receipt. All to no purpose, he blandly insisted upon the production of the receipt, which he knew was impossible, for he had himself picked it up from his office floor after Mr Hetherington's departure, and as soon as he heard of his death, had put it in the fire.

The widow, finding all argument of no avail, went off into a violent fit of hysteria. This had no more effect than the other arguments, for he quietly waited until she was calm, and then laid his proposition before the two women, which was :—If they would sign documents promising to pay the amount in three instalments, without interest (he laid great stress upon his generosity in this), he would accept them; if not, he would immediately put the matter in court, and sue them for the amount.

The very words 'court' and 'sueing,' almost put their hair on end; they imagined themselves in the witness box being questioned, and bullied, and perhaps, for some inadvertence, put into jail. They had never seen the inside of a law court, and their horror of it decided them.

They signed the papers, Mrs Howel not forgetting to remind Reed of the fate of those who robbed the fatherless and the widow; but he only smiled blandly, buttoned up the papers securely in his coat, and bowed himself out as obsequiously as he had bowed himself

## ENA

in, and the mother and daughter breathed more freely.

Betsy now came in and spread the table neatly for tea, not afternoon tea, but quite a substantial meal of bread and butter, cake and jam, sometimes chops or boiled eggs, omelette or any little potted or canned relish, and whenever a trip to Granston had been made a supply of toasted and buttered muffins or crumpets was added as an extra treat.

Mrs Hetherington established herself comfortably behind the silver teapot, and arranged the pretty china teaset, allowing her mother to assist her to the best of everything the table afforded. Then the children were helped, and Betsy brought them their 'mugs' of milk and water, and the two elders enjoyed their first cup of tea almost in silence. Over the third cup, which is popularly known as 'the gossiping cup,' they forgot their neighbour's affairs, and fell to discussing their own ways and means.

### CHAPTER III

THE widow had only  $\sigma$ . hundred pounds a year coming in from rents, and five pounds of that had to go for income tax, beside other taxes, and the poor's rate, which was very high that year.

Poor Mrs Hetherington said with tears in her eyes, and much truth in her assertion, 'We shall need the poors' rate ourselves far more than many of those who will get it.'

'Well, but that's neither here nor there, my dear,' said her mother cheerily, 'we must meet all our dues and demands, and live or starve on what is left.'

The orchard, in which the house was built, contained five acres of trees; they would sell the fruit, and if it was only a good year, that would greatly help. Then Grandma said she would meet part of the expense out of her own income, 'and,' she added brightly, 'we can sell Joggy and the wagonette, you know there is a tax on both of them, especially the wagonette, as it is a four-wheeled vehicle; and you, Esther, can have a nice little car, and a good donkey, that will save the tax, as nothing drawn by a donkey is taxed, and you can still "jog" round as you please.'

'Oh!' complained Mrs Hetherington. 'my only pleasure to be taken away from me! And me driving

## ENA

behind a kicking donkey, and all these dear children tumbled out, and perhaps some of them killed.'

'Well, well,' soothed the old lady, 'we'll see what else can be done.' Mrs Hetherington, who had found the country very dull indeed after Granston life and gossip, had taken to driving comfortably behind Joggy, and felt that was the only way in which existence was endurable.

'Then I'm afraid Betsy must go, we can't afford to keep a servant. Ena must wash the dishes, and John must attend to the pony carriage.'

'Tend to 'em yourself, Granny Grunt,' he said, and, finger to nose, escaped through the parlour window, and up his favourite tree.

The Grandma's blue eyes gleamed as she said to her daughter, 'You ought to whip him for that, Esther!

'I know I ought, mother,' she returned weakly, 'but how can I reach him there?' and she pointed to where he was shouting defiance at both, and looking every moment, as if the slender boughs must break, and let him into eternity.

He made his bargain not to be whipped, from his coin of vantage, then came down and finished his tea with great gusto.

'You're a bad boy to treat Grandma so,' said Ena gravely from the chimney corner, where she sat in the ingle nook, half hidden by the big pot of greenery.

'Hold your tongue!' he shouted, and taking from his pocket a sharp stone, he threw it at her, striking her on the forehead.

## ENA

'You should let him alone, Ena,' her mother said, 'you know he won't let you interfere with him.'

The child got up and went into the kitchen to Betsy for comfort. Sam, who all this time had been quietly eating his tea and looking on, now followed her, and the children basked in the warmth of the kitchen hearth, while Betsy got her own tea, and then washed up the tea things, grumbling to herself the while, 'It was jest a shame the way Missus let Master John go on, an' didn't do nuthin' to en, he'd oughter be at s-chule he'd ought, an' he aunten mischief, or wus ud come out.'

'We ought to go to school, Sam, like we did in Granston,' said Ena, 'don't you think so? I'm going to ask mamma to let us go.'

'I don't want to go to school,' returned he, 'but if you do, you'd best ask Grandma.'

Ena crept back into the parlour, and round by Grandma's side, who sat in her high-backed easy chair, her feet on a stool, and silver-rimmed spectacles on nose, knitting away as if existence depended on her speed. Ena got out a garter the old lady was teaching her to knit, and sat down near her. Presently her Grandma noticed how absorbed the child was, and spoke to her; she started, her mind was seeking how to approach the subject of school. She looked up, disclosing the bruise upon her forehead. 'Why,' said the old lady kindly, 'what a bruise you've got,' and then to herself sadly, 'that boy's very bad lately, always in mischief.'

'Send him to school, Grandma, let us all go.'



## ENA

The old lady reflected. 'There's only the National School at Skifton; that's too rough for young ladies, it might do for the boys.'

'But,' said this maiden of nine, 'I'm going to be a teacher, and earn my own living just as soon as I'm old enough.'

'Bless me, child!' and she looked over her spectacles as she always did when surprised, 'What put that into your head?'

'This,' she said, pointing to the blue mark upon her forehead, 'and then I can help you look after Hattie and the baby, John says they're "only girls" like me, and no good at all.'

Grandma was too taken-aback to say a word, and Mrs Hetherington coming in then, she said quietly to her, 'Don't you think we'd better send the children to school, Esther?'

'I don't see how we can stand the expense, besides driving them into Granston and back every day.'

'Well, but we could send them here, you know, all the farmers send theirs.'

Mrs Hetherington was quite offended that her mother should think such a school good enough for her children, and said with a toss of her head, 'Ena can't go, of course.'

'I don't see why she can't, Esther.'

'Oh! well we're almost paupers, I suppose, and you do just as you like with us. If poor John had only been here, it would have been very different,' and she began to cry.

## CHAPTER IV

'I do hate these big old rooms! I declare I'm never warm! The sun can't get in through those little leaded panes; and if I have some logs put on the hearth, I'm roasted. If poor dear John had only left me comfortably settled in Granston, in a house somewhere near yours on Regent Street, we might have been so happy, mightn't we mother? and we needn't have had the expense of Joggy and the wagonette; and we might have kept Betsy, or some good servant,' and Mrs Hetherington paused, and looked at the old lady, who was regarding her over her spectacles, well knowing some concession was going to be asked. 'I really don't see how we're to get along without Betsy, I'm not strong enough for sweeping and cooking and all that, and you know the children make so much work.'

'Well Esther, I think we could get along without the pony-carriage far better than we could without Betsy; but I've been thinking of another plan. You know you never use the best parlour, and the bedroom over it.'

Esther looked up from among her comfortable cushions on the roomy old sofa in alarm, and exclaimed, 'I'm not going to have any lodgers; don't go

## ENA

letting half my house, my poor children would have no liberty then, and besides I might get talked about, being a young widow.'

Her mother looked at the pretty little figure in her neatly fitting black dress, her fair, unwrinkled face resting against the deep crimson of a cushion, and said smilingly and with a mischievous twinkle in her eyes, 'You know, my dear, you'll be thirty-eight your next birthday, and I don't look on that as an altogether frivolous age. But I was merely going to propose that I should fit them up for myself. I must have my own fireside, my comfortable feather bed that plumps up all round me when I get into it; my birds and my window plants.'

'That would keep out what little light does come in at these windows,' interjected her daughter discontentedly, 'and then all the noise and trouble of the canaries.'

'Well I don't mind that, my dear,' continued the cheerful old lady. 'I know you wouldn't care for it where you sat, but I miss them; they're like old friends. Now, on condition that you'll give up those two rooms to me, so I can fit them up to suit myself, for I must say, too much of this old fashioned furniture is rather dismal. Then you see, I can let my house in Regent Street, and be here all the time with you.'

The mother and daughter, who had lived all their lives in Granston, in the more lightly built town houses, thought the heaviness of this old place rather oppressive. It was built right on the side of the road. When you

## ENA

opened the front door you went down two or three steps, into a large hall, with its great cavernous open-hearth in front of you. All the downstairs rooms opened into it, that is those which had been kept in repair. A wing to the south had fallen to decay, and the grape vines climbed amongst its ruins, the fruit ripening in the warm nooks, making an abundant and delicious crop in sunny years. The walls were very thick, and only rose to where the high dormer windows of the bedrooms commenced, rearing their hooded heads through the thatch, like great eyes. The roomy attics were only lighted from the gable ends. On the right of the hall as you entered, was the best parlour; this room enjoyed the privilege of two windows, which despite Mrs Hetherington's complaint, were by no means small. True the panes were diamond shaped, and set in lead, but the lattice opened out the full size of the centre, and they held deep embrasures where one might curl up among the cushions, and watch the passers-by. These consisted of a few heavy country waggons with their wide tyres, generally drawn by three horses, harnessed in line, their driver walking alongside whip in hand; or a woman with a large basket on her arm, going to the village shop to dispose of her butter and eggs, and get groceries or whatever she might need in return; sometimes a fish-cart out of the marshes, or a pedlar's hand cart, and troops of children of all ages, to and fro, for school, some of them walking daily from the Marshland farms, as far as eight or ten miles. Very seldom a carriage or anything

## ENA

smarter than a two-wheeled cart or gig. On the opposite side was a rail fence, and acres of pasturage stretched away, with only a very old mulberry tree, lying on the ground, to break the monotony of grass and sky. The side window looked into their own orchard. Peace, peace, utter quiet and peace!

All the floors down stairs were of glazed bricks, and, to humour the town wife of Mr John, as Mr Hetherington was always called, plenty of straw had been put down, and a carpet spread over it; that being almost the only innovation. A large cabinet of mahogany, black with age, stood in the centre of one wall, with a profusion of old china and silver upon it, and a mirror framed in the same dark wood extended to the rather low ceiling from the back of it. Hugh beams of wood stretched across this ceiling, making it appear lower than it really was. But the glory of the room was its immense open hearth, raised almost a foot above the floor, and extending two-thirds of its entire length, with its settees inside its ingle nook, its brake hanging down the chimney, upon which the tea-kettle was hung to boil; its big pot of greenery in summer; but best of all in winter, with its great back-log across the dog-irons, their bright heads shining in the crackling blaze of the smaller wood piled in front. Over it, the high mantel, shining with its tall candle-sticks of brass and silver, with other bright and quaint articles, its short curtain below, and its two long ones on either side, which were drawn back when there was a fire, to escape the sparks, and forward in the summer, and prettily draped. The rest of the furniture

## ENA

was dark and heavy, except several very modern, and very cosy easy chairs.

But the kitchen was the children's delight, and as John was afraid of losing Betsy's home-made sweets and cakes if he was naughty, they had peace and quiet there. The great hearth here had several hakes hanging down it for boiling purposes, its oven being underneath the raised platform, as it were ; with hams and sides of bacon hanging up the chimney to smoke ; some green bacon hung from the rafters or beams, in company with bags of herbs, strings of onions, and bright kitchen utensils. Over the mantel here were the bedroom candlesticks, moulds for making tallow candles, ironing boxes, and bright sauce-pan lids. On one wall, like a great yellow sun, shone the big brass warming-pan, which had been used for generations to warm or air the roomy beds. The kitchen was very large, as it occupied the entire length of the house, except an airy pantry, and a small scullery, where all the dish-washing was done, and where all black pots and pans had their abiding places. Betsy had knitted a large rug from old pieces of cloth, for the front of the fire, giving the place an air of comfort.

From the back door of the kitchen, and up its two steps, you went right into a garden rank with ragged robins, candy-tuft, lark-spur, wallflower, sweet peas, holly-hocks, and monthly roses, whilst creeping up the old thatch was a honey-suckle whose roots and stem were curled and gnarled with age. Here and there was a patch of parsley, some heads of horse-radish, bunches

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of sweet marjoram, thyme and sage, with other pot herbs, and in a sunny corner, thatched over with straw, were a line of bee hives of the old dome shaped kind. Beyond was the vegetable garden, with some currant and gooseberry bushes, and rows of raspberry canes, then the rest of the five acres stretched out in orchard and grass, bounded by a border of poplars, which were the highest trees for twenty miles around.

## CHAPTER V

'WELL Ena,' said Grandma briskly, a few mornings after the talk with her daughter, 'shall we go to Granston to-day, and see how my birds are getting along? I must decide what I shall want here, as I'm going to fit up the best parlour and bedroom to suit me, then you see I can look after Hattie and baby Jessie while you are learning to be a school-mistress.'

So to Granston they went in the carrier's cart, a two-wheeled affair, with a cover over it, drawn by one horse, and which jolted up and down, keeping time with the pace of the horse, as he shuffled along. The Carrier was an old woman, whose hands, from the wrists, bent outward, as though much holding of the reins, and keeping her horse from scratching his nose, everytime he stumbled, had made them grow that way.

Mrs Howel went first to a paper-hanger and painter, and sent him out, armed with bright papers and light paints, to brighten up her rooms in the most unconscionable and modern manner.

When they returned with the furniture, the rooms looked so light and bright, they jarred on Ena; but the good Grandma was in a bustle of delight, putting up gay chintz curtains over the open hearth, hanging the canaries, arranging her plants in the windows; whilst behind her geraniums, calsolarias, and pelagoniums,



## ENA

she hung curtains of fine netting, daintily darned in patterns by her own deft fingers.

Ena sat on a low stool with baby Jessie in her lap, watching it all; at last she said thoughtfully, 'Grandma, I do think everything gets bright and pretty where you are, and you are always bright and pretty yourself.' The brisk old lady paused in her work, and looked at the child with her bright eyes full of pleasure; but a shade passed over them as she looked at the too serious looking child. 'What ails you,' she said, 'you look as forlorn as can be, don't you feel well, or has John been teasing you?'

'I'm quite well, thank you, Grandma, but John says I'm to go and mind Dudden's baby, and get sixpence a week for it; and that Mamma only cares for him, she isn't fond of Sam and us girls. I asked Mamma, and she said, "Stuff and nonsense, don't fly in the face of Providence, and set your brother against you, or you'll have no home by and bye, because he'll be master, and you must do as he tells you."

Grandma was silent, she had always thought the law of entailment unjust; for girls as a rule needed more assistance than boys to make their way in life; they should at least have as much; and here was this boy growing unbearable already.

Ena continued, after a pause, but with great decision. 'I shan't mind Dudden's baby, but I shall go to school.'

'So you shall, Ena, so you shall, and learn to be a teacher. Never mind what John says.'

## CHAPTER VI

MONDAY morning came, and Mrs Hetherington was roused early enough to go off to the village school with her three eldest born. She saw Mr Linwood, the schoolmaster, arranged about the fee, which was only threepence per week for each child, and promised to send them regularly. She returned, feeling better for having roused herself to some kind of action, had Joggy harnessed, and with Jessie in Grandma's lap, and wee, puny Hattie at their feet, set off for a three or four hours' drive. They did not return till after the children had gone back to school at two o'clock; so they missed the troubled face of Ena, who most unusual thing for her, had been getting into trouble.

The school was a mixed one of some three hundred children, taught by Mr Linwood, with male pupil teachers and monitors under him. Mrs Linwood, who held no Government certificate, only went into school in the afternoon to teach plain sewing, cutting-out, knitting and darning.

The school itself was a two-storied building, the lower storey of which could be divided into three separate rooms by folding doors. Morning prayers were always said with the doors pushed back, and directly afterwards

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(except on Mondays, when the school-pence were first taken) drawn out again, and the three grades of the elder boys and girls had their rooms to themselves.

In the upper story, the Infant department, that is all children from the ages of four to seven, were taught in the morning; while the girls all assembled there in the afternoon, for their instruction in needlework. Shelves with curtains in front, were here provided for the girls' clothing. Consequently, at twelve o'clock the girls came up to dress before going home, or to get the lunch they had brought with them, if they lived far away.

Ena came with the rest, and being espied by the teacher in charge, a mischievous son of Mr Linwood's, as being new and shy, he suddenly presented himself, and said he was going to kiss her. Quick anger flashed in her cheeks and eyes, and seizing a pointer, which being thick at one end and thin at the other, could scarcely be thrown straight, she hurled it with all her might at him; missing him of course; but the sharp end made a rent in a large new map of the British Isles, hanging over the mantel.

Immediately there was consternation! They all stood greatly in awe of Mr Linwood, a man standing over six feet in height, and with a quick and alert manner seldom seen in big men.

Ena stood with the rest, then raising her head and still flashing eyes, she announced her intention of going down, and telling him herself.

'Yar darsent!' sung out several voices. The teacher hurried out his classes, and got away quickly himself,

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thinking she would tell upon him; he knew that meant a caning, big as he was, from his father, who was never known to spare the rod on his own or any one else's children.

Ena went slowly down, the Infant classes scampering off in a hurry past her. The master was standing at his desk, cane in hand, ready to punish some culprit, who stood waiting by, longing to get it over, yet dreading for it to commence. She looked straight at him, and said in a rather tremulous voice, 'Mr Linwood, I've torn the map over the mantel upstairs. I threw the pointer at something else, and it went through that. I am very sorry,' her voice was almost a whisper as she said the last words, her courage was failing her. She thought the next moment the cane would descend on her shoulders, and her face wore an ashen whiteness, even to the lips.

The teachers all down the long room paused in their work of putting away black-boards and books, to see what would come of this strange procedure. The master seemed waiting for more, in reality he was too much astonished to recover himself at once; then he said, 'Go home to dinner, I'll go up this afternoon and look at it.'

She made a courtesy, as she had seen the others do, and said 'Thank you, Sir!' then went slowly out. Long afterwards, when Mr Linwood knew all about it, he said he was glad to see her able to walk out, he thought she was going to faint.

In the afternoon Ena fared better, Mrs Linwood, a

## ENA

fine matronly woman, toiled up the long stairs, her arms full of needlework. The girls, who were seated all round the room, stopped their noisy talk, and rose to receive her. Then two or three of the eider ones went to a painted chest of drawers, and took out a number of 'lap-bags,' these were small print aprons with a piece joined on at the bottom, and partly up the sides, forming a kind of large pocket, in which the girls put away their work. A running string went through a hem in the top, and they tied them on like aprons. Happy the girl who possessed a pair of scissors and a needle-book to dangle by a tape from the waist!

Many of them had work in their bags to go on with, others crowded round the work table and Mrs Linwood, trying to secure the first pieces given out. Old stockings had holes darned in them, and thin pieces run evenly by the thread. Stocking knitting, and the making of many useful articles, beside clothing for the 'Parish Bags,' which consisted of bad linen and under-clothing for men, women, or infants. These things were put, so many in a bag, and sent to the sick poor, upon condition that they returned them clean and whole, when no longer needed; with the exception of the infant's clothing, which was given. Then they made dozens of plain pinafores, which were either given to the children, or sold to them at the cost of the material.

When work ran short, they learnt different stitches, such as back-stitching, herring-boning, button-holing and so on, using little squares of linen, or they had

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canvas and bright coloured cottons with which they made 'samplers,' containing all the capital and small letters of the alphabet, followed by the figures from one to ten; all embellished by some wonderful lines, and the corners decorated with impossible trees, baskets, or flowers. These were simply works of art in the eyes of the girls, and when one of them had worked hers so well that it was presented to her, a frame and a piece of glass was generally procured, and it was hung up in the cottage with as much pride and pleasure as many girls of the better educated classes hang their paintings.

Mrs Linwood's only daughter Annie, a girl of Ena's own age, helped with the little ones, and as these two soon became fast friends, they did this together.

There was little order, how could there be with some eighty girls to be kept at work, and only one pair of hands to do it; but there was much work done, and many a girl in after life could clothe her husband and children with much greater skill and economy than she could have done without this early instruction.

Ena made herself as useful as she could to Mrs Linwood in many little ways, and it was a proud day for her when the tired, worried woman allowed her to take some fifteen of the little girls all to herself. She fetched a chair, got a small table to hold the scraps of work, needles and cotton, and established herself over her 'own class.' Of course, Annie Linwood had a like class and equipments at the other end of the room, thus leaving Mrs Linwood with some fifty of the elder

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girls, some of whom could help themselves. The two friends continued their classes for many months, teaching the little ones to hold their needles, and make their first stitches.

Poor Mrs Linwood now became bedridden for a long time, and a young person, who was an excellent needle-woman, but who knew nothing of discipline, came to take her place. Ena and Annie made strenuous efforts with the small girls, but the disorder of the elder ones was hopeless. They only behaved themselves while Mr Linwood marched solemnly through the room, cane in hand, and were as bad as ever directly he disappeared.

When Mrs Linwood returned, the needle work was in a dreadful state, she soon however, got it into its usual condition; and things went smoothly on till Ena was in her thirteenth year, when Mrs Linwood again broke down.

The young woman who had taken her place before, was married, and no one seemed willing to undertake the girls and the sewing; so Ena and Annie tried their hands, just while some one was found, but they got along so well, nothing more was said of a woman for the sewing. The two eldest girls were sent to take charge of the right and left wings, as the girls had playfully called their classes; whilst they took their seats at the big centre work table. They made some serious mistakes, of course, both in cutting out, and 'fixing' work, and many a gore, gusset or wristband was found to be put on other end first, or wrong side out, making much unpicking. But Annie went home

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with Ena, and they carried great bundles of work to Mrs Howel's cheery room, and spent many an evening or Saturday afternoon, busy and happy, whilst the dear old lady helped them out.

John had been too much occupied of late to find much time for worrying the rest, and things looked very peaceful and pleasant at home. Often, as Ena returned to school, during the winter, at a few minutes to two o'clock, through the snow, drizzling rain, or dense fog, when you could distinguish nothing three feet ahead of you, she would look into the cosy parlour, its blazing logs making the old mahogany shine; Grandma dozing in her easy chair, over her knitting; Mamma with a rug over her feet, lying on the sofa, a book or paper in her hand, and fast asleep. She felt tempted to stay with them, the contrast was so great, compared to the big, cold, white-washed school-room, its one fire-grate fenced round by an iron railing; but the thought 'I have my own living to get,' would send her cheerfully off, not to return till six o'clock, an hour after the family tea; for she had her own lessons to do after school, with the pupil teachers and monitors, as she now taught throughout the day.

The yearly Examinations for Pupil Teachers, came in this part of the country, just three days before Christmas, and several days before Ena's thirteenth birthday. Mr Linwood, in applying to the Examiner for permission for Ena to 'sit,' mentioned this to him, and he kindly waived the usually strict rule in her favour; that is, the rule which provides that all



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applicants, who wish to take the preliminary examination for Pupil Teachers, must be thirteen years of age.

How she studied! her Grandma looked on in astonishment at the strength of her resolution. Ena explained to her mother, that in case she succeeded at the forthcoming examination, she would, have to go away from home to be apprenticed, as Mrs Linwood held no certificate, and a girl could only be apprenticed to a schoolmistress who held one.

'I suppose you'll suit yourself,' she returned in her usual tone of disapproval, 'you've always been headstrong; none of the big ones stand by me, except John. Sam is getting almost as bad as you; and now you're going to disgrace me by being a charity schoolmistress.'

'Mr Hilton says, Mamma, that "work is prayer," so long as we strive to do our duty, and that boys and girls should learn how to get an honest living, and not grow up dependent on their relatives.'

'I suppose he thinks the fifth commandment doesn't matter much. Is Sam going to be a charity school master, too?'

'I think not, mamma. Mr Linwood says he writes beautifully, and will be an excellent book-keeper, if he goes on as he has begun, and Grandma and I thought——'

'That's it, *you* thought—I'm a mere puppet in my own house, no one consults me about anything.'

'Dear Mamma, didn't you say yourself, years ago, that John would be master here by and bye?'

'Of course he will, but that isn't saying that the rest

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of you have to go away. John's a good boy, and won't grudge you a home, if you try to please him.'

'I seldom can please him, Mamma, and I would much rather earn my own living, then I could help you with Hattie and Jessie, you know.'

'Oh yes! and make them charity school teachers too, I suppose.'

Ena was about to reply, when she caught her Grand-ma's eye, who said, 'Go and fetch my spectacles, Ena, I left them by the geraniums, I think.'

Ena went, and the discussion, which generally took the form of a circle when Mrs Hetherington argued, was ended.

## CHAPTER VII

ENA established herself in the kitchen with her books, where she usually studied in the evening. 'Betsy,' she said, as she seated herself on the settle by the ingle nook, 'will you get up, and let me have breakfast by six o'clock? I'm going to the examination in Granston to-morrow, if all is well, and I promised to be at the Linwood's at seven; we shall have to walk by the short cut, across the fields to the ferry, for we must be in the school-rooms of St Nicholas a little before nine, to get our papers.'

'Well I do say it's a shame, Master John kin hev the hoss, when he wants to go any place, an' there's a saddle bought for en, and a tax to pay on that, but you've got to fut it.'

'I didn't ask for it, Betsy.'

'You wouldn't a gotten it, an' yer hed.'

'We shall all walk together, it would be cold driving so early,' continued Ena, without noticing Betsy's remark. 'I expect I shall have to go at a trot, they are all so tall, except poor Sam Hayes, and he can go pretty fast, for all his lameness.'

'I'll git yer brekfus, an' a good en tue. Shall I put yer up some lunch an' all?'

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'Please!' and Ena was deep in historical dates for a few minutes. 'I shall miss you ever so much when I'm away, Betsy, you've always been so good to me.' Then after a pause, when 'dates' scarcely formed the subject of her thoughts, which seemed to have wandered to her own early recollections, she said, 'Do you remember the time you woke me up, when dear Daddy was dying?'

'Don't I though! I must a skared you outen your seven senses! I was skared outen mine.'

'Seven senses? why you have only five.'

'Haint I? I 'spose yow gotten seven, cos yow gotten readin' an' writin' an' I haint,' sniffed Betsy, half offended.

'Oh! no, we all have only five senses, we are all made alike.'

'Well,' said Betsy, mollified, 'we grow different, one hes larnin' an' one hes work.'

'It don't matter which, so long as we do it as well as we can, I'm sure you do, Betsy.'

'I shouldn't ha stopped long whare yer Grandma wus ef I didn't,' returned the matter-of-fact Betsy, 'she pays me, an' it's her I tek my orders from, an' she's a good en' to work fu, ef she is strict; she gen me that nice wincy dress last Christmas, an' Jack he said es how I looked stunnin' in it.'

'You're engaged to Jack Andrews, arn't you, Betsy?'

'We've kep company this five year, he's a workin' up his place, an' puttin' some fruit trees in his land, an' I'm a savin' up my wages so es to put in a little

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shop, I think way down them marshes people 'll come an' buy little things, instid a comin' all the way up town.'

'I expect you're right, Betsy; but he'll have a good wife. I don't know what Grandma 'll do without you?'

Betsy laughed consciously, and Ena asked, 'How old are you?'

'Twenty-five I reckon. But did you say es you wus goin' away frum hum?'

'I shall if I'm successful to-morrow, there!' she said, putting away her books. 'I can't study to-night, I feel too restless.'

Betsy called her at five o'clock next morning, and she soon shook off sleep, and dressed herself as neatly as she could; painfully aware that when she took off her jacket, the material of her dress waist would be seen not to match with her skirt: for mamma had bought too little the first time, and then trusted to her 'eye' to match, the result being that one had a grey shade and the other a brown. But it was a stout wincy and kept her warm.

All the teachers were waiting at the school-master's for her, so they set off at once, Ena walking by the master's side, and the rest in groups talking over the coming event, the younger ones asking dates, rules, and so on, from the elder. Their cheeks glowed as they went briskly along through the crisp, frosty air, guided only by the light of the stars.

Mr Linwood gave Ena some good advice concerning her papers, telling her to read carefully the list of

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questions, before answering any, pick out those she could do best, and take only those: to write plainly, as nothing but plain round hand would be read by those correcting the papers, and to be very careful of her spelling.

Arrived at the school-rooms of St Nicholas, Ena went to the class-room pointed out to her, and which was to serve the girls as a dressing-room, and felt quite relieved that no one seemed to notice her dress. They had more serious work on hand, for any one of those already apprenticed who failed, lost the Government grant of money for the whole year past.

The examination closed about five o'clock (an hour having been allowed at noon for lunch), then Mr Linwood and his party returned, as they had come, on foot. They reached his home about seven o'clock, where a substantial supper awaited them, and they all made merry over it, in their youth and good spirits, easily forgetting the fatigues and anxieties of the day.

Harry and Annie went to Ena's door with her, and this much-looked-forward-to day was over.

They heard in due time that Ena had been successful, indeed it had never chanced that one of Mr Linwood's teachers had failed. 'Now we must look for a school where I can be apprenticed,' she said to Grandma.

'Another year will be time enough for that, child.'

'You see I shall have to be apprenticed five years, that will make me eighteen; then two years at the training-college. You see I shall be able to help

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myself and the others when I'm twenty; just when John is twenty-one.'

'Well, well,' said Grandma, studying Ena over her spectacles, 'you've certainly thought it all out; too old for your years, Ena, too old!' and she fell to thinking. Then she continued, 'you know we didn't get much money for our fruit last year, and some of the tenants haven't paid up their rents yet; then my money in the "funds" only brought two-and-half per cent. But you must have decent clothes to go with, and I was thinking, if I got you some flannel and calico, we could go on and make your things, and the plainest parts might be done at school.'

'Dear Grandma! that is just like you to think of all that, you're always doing something for me.'

'I mean to keep on till you can help yourself, if the Lord spares me, and you're a good girl.'

Ena's only answer was a kiss; for these two understood each other perfectly.

Ena kept on in the house school, nothing being settled, although they had corresponded with the principals of several schools.

## CHAPTER VIII

ONE morning, being rather late, Ena took a short cut across some fields, and several small children were trudging along with her, when she heard some one shouting excitedly, and looking in the direction from whence came the voice; she saw a bull, head down, careering towards them. She could easily have returned, and crossed the wide ditch by the single plank over which they had come, for she was light, and could run like a deer, but the three or four little ones clinging to her skirts, must be thought of. She saw her best plan was to make, with as much speed as possible towards the man who was running in their direction, with a pitchfork in his hand. They now formed a triangle, the shorter side being themselves and the man, and a few seconds would decide their fate. On came the bull from one direction, the man and pitchfork from another, Ena and the terrified little ones from the third. They were getting to close quarters, the children from fright and want of breath, could run no more. Ena put them behind her, and faced the bull; he hesitated, and they were saved, for a sharp prick from the pitchfork decided him, and he went bellowing off, followed by the man.



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A few minutes later, and Ena was moving quickly down the long room, where all the children were standing in silent lines at their desks, waiting for prayers; as she generally played the hymn sung upon the harmonium. Her Grandma had paid for her music lessons, and Ena had tried her best to profit by them. She felt rather tremulous and shaken for a while, but she told no one of the morning's adventure; it only became known through the young farm hand, who had come to their rescue, 'She's a plucky one, that Miss Ena, I tell yer, now,' he had said in relating the circumstance.

At noon Mr Linwood gave her a letter, and told her to show it to her Mother and Grandma. It was from a relative of the old clergyman's, who had highly recommended Ena for a school near Reading.

'Eight shillings a week seems a great deal to pay, and washing besides,' grumbled Mrs Hetherington.

'I shall pay for her, if I'm spared, till she can support herself,' returned Mrs Howel, quietly.

'In that case I've nothing to say, only I'd like to know who's to find clothes and books for her? I can't pinch the rest, and give everything to Ena. The old lady knew she wouldn't pinch herself for any of them, but she reflected that she had helped to spoil her, and only said cheerfully, 'Ena and I have made most of the outfit already, there are only a dress or two for best, and some small things that are easily obtained.'

'I knew that there was something very secret going

## ENA

on lately, with you and Ena shut up together in the best parlour so much. Well, mother, you two always have your own way. If there's any truth in a saying, you'll be sure "to live long." You are doing as you like with Ena, I shall do as I like with John.'

## CHAPTER IX

FIFTH of May, seven o'clock in the morning, saw Ena on the platform of the Granston station, ticket in hand, and luggage stowed away, saying good-bye to her mother, who had spent the night in Granston with her, for fear of missing the early train for Shoreditch, London. It was a bright, sunny morning; the third class carriage was pretty well filled. Ena, from her corner, kissed her hand to her mother; and, with a trembling, but courageous heart, left what of childhood she had known behind her, as the bell rang, and the parliamentary train started on its tedious journey. She curled herself closely into her corner, and watched the various occupants of the carriage who were within her range of vision.

There was a big, fat woman with a faded green cotton umbrella clutched in both hands, sitting guard over three bundles, two band boxes, a basket of sundries, and many little parcels done up in pieces of newspaper too small for them, these were constantly bursting out, and requiring attention, besides being counted at every station.

A threadbare, half-blind man, accompanied by a young girl Ena thought extremely lovely, in her plain

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brown lindsay suit, and broad hat of the same quiet shade. She looked round upon her fellow-travellers, however, with a lofty air of contempt, and seemed to answer the man, whom she called 'Papa,' with great impatience.

A servant girl going to her 'place' in London, and smartened up with much bright ribbon. A man with a banjo under his arm, and a very high collar, the points of which hung limply down. Some mechanics with their baskets of tools; and opposite Ena, travelling backwards to escape the wind, dust and smoke from the window, an elderly Jewish lady, whom she knew to be the wife of a rich jeweller, whose magnificent display was one of the sights of the 'High Street,' so called from a peculiar rise which occurred about half way of its length, and which the shops followed on either side. It was really a bridge over a tributary of the Ouse, and had been built for the accommodation of the 'lighters' or heavy barges that passed along laden with coal to and from some of the mills, breweries, and coal wharves situated beyond it. She was doubtless travelling third class for economy's sake, for Ena had heard Grandma talk of the miserly way in which they lived, compared to their wealth, in order to save money for the purchase of land in Palestine. He had been to see his wife off, wearing the same tall hat of white beaver, with the hair rather long and curly upon it, Ena could remember since she had been able to remark anything.

Her Grandma had instructed her to speak to no one but the guard on the train, and ask directions of no one

## ENA

except a policeman, even then to make a mental note of his number. She had not noticed a little man, with long white hair, in a quakerish suit and broad brimmed hat, who sat in line with her, so she was startled when an insidious voice at her elbow said, 'Going far, young woman?' She didn't exactly like to be called 'young woman,' and looked at him very seriously. He smiled reassuringly, and repeated the question, this time substituting 'miss' for 'young woman.'

'To School, Sir!' she answered briefly.

'Ha! to school, I should think a handsome young woman like you, had done with all that kind of thing. I'm going out to Americay now, and I'm going to take a whole ship load of good people along; how would you like to be one of the party? Oh! yes,' he continued, noticing her look of surprise, 'you'd soon find a husband you would, with your good looks.'

To say that Ena 'couldn't believe her own ears,' is saying little for the bewilderment she felt. Looking across at the Jewish lady, she found her paying close attention, although in the rattle and bang of the train she could scarcely have distinguished the words. But the astonishment and disgust on Ena's face was easily read. The girl said nothing, but rose and placed herself beside the elderly lady. At the next station the man, who was a Mormon Elder, got out, doubtless to try his powers of persuasion on others. All through that hot and dusty journey Ena sat by her, she felt safer there, and although neither spoke, she knew the good lady understood her.

## ENA

It had been arranged that the schoolmistress, who had been spending her Easter vacation in London with her relatives, should meet Ena at Shoreditch Station. She looked out of the carriage with a sickness of loneliness, at the surging crowd down on the platform. She noticed a small, brisk woman making her way to the luggage van, single out her boxes, and stand by them; that was to be the sign by which Ena should know her. She hurried to her.

'You are Ena Hetherington?' she asked sharply as the girl came up. 'I'm Miss Hatford, Mr Kobin will send to meet us at the Reading Station; we shall be home by tea-time, if we catch our train.'

'Here porter! this box to a cab, for London Bridge, quick!' Turning to Ena, 'Take your hat box yourself,' and she hurried after the porter.

Ena looked up and met the kind eyes of the Jewish lady, who smiled and nodded to her. She seemed satisfied that her silent charge had fallen into the right hands; then she left the station, followed by a footman in livery, and got into a sumptuously appointed carriage, where sat a lady so like herself, Ena concluded they must be sisters.

Miss Hatford hurried the cabman through the crowded streets. It was wonderful to Ena that their wheels were not locked with others a dozen times.

A block! every vehicle held back by the raised hand of a policeman, while streams of pedestrians hurried over the crossing.

'Cabby! I'll give you a shilling extra, if you get us

## ENA

to London Bridge in time for the 1.10 train,' called Miss Hatford, leaning out of the cab window.

'Alright, Mum,' returned Cabby, and he followed up every advantage. Presently they were free again, and he whipped up his old jaded horse, till Ena shivered as the blows fell on its poor bones.

On the bridge! what a wonderful sight for a country girl, they were over it far too soon to satisfy her curiosity. She glanced at Miss Hatford, who was studying her intently. The scenes through which they passed had no novelty for her. She pointed out to Ena the Embankment, the Houses of Parliament, and the Dome of St Paul's. To Ena, what wonderful mazes of masonry, what splendour and squalor, pleasure and pain, fine clothes and dirty rags, side by side. How the moving masses of humanity, going in each direction, never jostling each other, but all minding their own business, going their own ways, neither caring, nor noticing what others were doing, enjoying, or suffering. All this consciously or unconsciously impressed itself upon Ena's mind, as she sat looking out of the cab window, and came back to her with added meaning in after years.

Miss Hatford was thinking to herself 'My first pupil teacher! Looks as if she had a will of her own, she'll find her match right here now, if she is the tallest.'

They got out at London Bridge Station. Miss Hatford took her luggage from the cloak room, Ena's was brought up by a porter, and tickets obtained, in what seemed to the country girl's inexperience, a

## ENA

marvellously short time. They had but just taken their seats in the afternoon express, when off they went, over house tops and streets, till they emerged into the open country. Here were whole fields of sage, thyme, rose trees and lavender bushes, beside vegetables of all descriptions, cultivated for the London markets.

They were in Reading at 2.30, and there, outside the station, stood Mr Kobin's low carriage, with a tall up-standing horse, who looked as if he would step over the traces every time he raised his feet.

Ena thought Miss Hatford's introduction of her to the coachman quite superfluous, and wondered at her familiar greeting to him, quite as if he was an old friend.

A carrier came and enquired 'Any luggage, Miss?' but he didn't touch his hat, as a carrier at home would have done.

'Here! Well, what's your name again? Ena! Such a fancy name,' she said, turning to the coachman, who laughed. 'Go and show this man our boxes, and look sharp, or we shan't wait for you,' adding as she settled herself in the seat beside him, 'I don't believe in keeping a dog and barking myself.' At which they both laughed outright, and were still enjoying the subtlety of the joke, when Ena returned.

'Climb up into that back seat, and hold on, we don't drive like old cabby.' Ena jumped lightly in but began to wish she had not left her lunch in the railway carriage at Shoreditch, for she had eaten nothing since her early breakfast, and felt worn and faint.

'Pretty stuck-up-ish! ain't she?' said the coachman



## ENA

by way of conversation, as he jerked his thumb over his shoulder in Ena's direction.

'I'll take it out of her, never you fear,' she returned, with her strong cockney accent, she didn't exactly leave out her h's, and put them in where they didn't belong, but there was a hint of it, in all she said.

However, the part of the country through which they drove was lovely, up and down among the Chiltern Hills, through woods almost dense enough in places to shut out the sunshine, in others it filtered through the fluttering leaves, and lay in an intricate network over everything. Again on a hill, and there lay miles of country, spread out before you in field, orchard and park, with cottage, farmhouse, and country mansion, all bathed in the sun's red afternoon glow: a new and delightful experience to Ena, who had been accustomed to the Norfolk and Lincolnshire fens and marshlands.

They drove into pretty, but not very pretentious Parsonage grounds by the back gate, up to a side door which led to the servant's hall, and were taken into the kitchen for tea. The Linwoods never went with the servants at home, and M. Hiller would never have thought of asking the Hetheringtons to do so. In fact Mrs Hiller and her father's mother had been at the same boarding-school, and had always been friends. Mrs Linwood, too, was a well-educated woman, the only daughter of well-to-do parents; and as Miss Hertford joked and gossiped and laughed loudly with the servants, listening eagerly to what they had to tell

## ENA

her, Ena could not help contrasting her with the refined wife of the school-master, and scarcely to her advantage. Miss Hatford, whose wits were keen enough, seemed to perceive something of this, for she said to her, 'Go over to our rooms in the gardener's cottage, and see they are ready; I shan't come over till after supper.'

'Good shet, to bad rubbige!' said cook with her nose in the air, as Ena closed the door behind her. 'Thinks her's too good for the kitchen; I'd like to see her, when Missus ketches right on her.'

'Leave her to Hattie,' suggested the house-maid, 'I'll engage she'll fetch her down a peg or two.'

Miss Hatford, or 'Hattie,' as she was familiarly known in the servants' hall, expressed her readiness to do this, and they resumed their gossip.

Thus dismissed Ena found her way out, but went round the wrong side of the house, and came suddenly upon Mr Kobin sitting listlessly in the shade of a small rustic summer-house, evidently tired and dispirited. She had just time to notice his big, strong frame (he had been one of the athletes of his University) his small dark head, and swarthy face, when he looked up and saw her, as she turned quickly to retrace her steps.

'Oh! come here!' he called out gruffly, but not unkindly, 'let me see, what is your name?'

'Miss Hetherington!' she returned, making the pretty courtesy she had been taught at the young ladies' school in Granston.

## ENA

He looked at her meditatively. 'Miss Hatford met you in London?'

'Yes, Mr Kobin, thank you!'

'I think you should say, Sir! when you address me,' he said stiffly. He had worked hard to gain his position, and he could dispense with no whit of his dignity. When a poor curate, on one hundred pounds a year, he had met a maiden lady, much his senior, who had settled quite a handsome income upon him for her lifetime, had married him, and kept house upon the six or seven hundred she had left. Her father had been somewhat of a miser, and had accumulated his fortune in the back street of a large city, his business sign being three brass balls over the door; and here the present Mrs Kobin had lived till some forty years had passed over her head; when her respected parent was good enough to pass away, and leave her his sole heiress. But she was no novice in money affairs, as she had assisted him, and knew all about the investments, when they came into her possession. This lady had been described over the servants' tea, by the coachman, the only man-servant in the house, as 'a lady as could drive a hoss, a man or a divil.' As Ena turned and saw a small withered old lady approaching she knew it must be Mrs Kobin, and she thought the man could have added, 'girls and women' to his category of creatures over which her driving power might extend.

She put up her glass and examined the girl slowly from head to foot, several hairy moles upon her throat

## ENA

and chin coming into prominence as she did so. She enumerated audibly the articles of dress first. 'H'm! Golden brown and cream striped mohair dress, black tweed jacket with collar, cuffs and pocket of velvet, same colour; black straw hat trimmed with same, kid gloves *and* kid boots.' The gloves Ena held in her hand, they were the only things she had taken off for tea. Miss Hatford had thrown off her things and seemed quite at home.

Mrs Kobin continued her inspection. 'Hair golden brown, plaited a la mode; colourless complexion; large grey eyes, not a very small mouth; and a broad, rather stubborn chin; looks rather conceited, must be kept in her place.' All this just as deliberately as if she was looking over a cow or a horse she intended to buy. Mr Kobin exhibited neither surprise nor impatience, but sat with half-closed eyes, in perfect indifference. Poor Ena's cheeks were not colourless now, as the old lady lowered her glass, dropped upon the seat by her husband, and said, 'Ah! the pupil teacher from Norfolk, I suppose?'

'From Skifton, Mrs Kobin.'

'What!' sharply ejaculated Mrs Kobin.

Ena thought she might be a little deaf, so repeated a little louder, 'from Skifton.'

'I heard you, make your courtesy and say "Ma'am," when you are speaking to me.' Then she raised her glass again, and closely scanned the address of a letter she held in her hand.

Ena hardly knew whether to go or stay, but seeing

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one absorbed in his weary reverie, and the other engaged upon the envelope of a letter, she concluded to go, and leave the dismal looking pair to mar the beauty of the bright flowers and the brilliant sunshine; a dull day with sleet and rain drifted against the window panes by an east wind, seemed far more appropriate to them.

'Hetherington!' called Mrs Kobin shrilly, she evidently had been near enough to hear the name when her husband had enquired it. Ena returned, her eyes bright and her colour high.

'Don't go till I tell you, and I might as well say at once, Hetherington' (she had seen that the surname annoyed the girl, and repeated it accordingly, 'putting on the thumb screw' was one of her delights), 'I shall allow no airs with me whatever your master, yes, your master,' she repeated, as Ena made an involuntary gesture, 'may choose to do. Now, make your courtesy, and say "I beg your pardon, Ma'am."'

'I—I didn't know I had done anything wrong,' stammered Ena, and she turned enquiringly to Mr Kobin.

'Oh! you needn't look to him to take your part. You say you're only thirteen, you look a deal more like sixteen.'

'Grandma had my dresses made long, she thought—'

'There, there I don't want to know what your Granny thought. Did Hatford send you on a message?'

'Miss Hatford told me to go and see if our rooms

## ENA

were ready, Mrs, I mean Ma'am; and I didn't know which way to go, I'm sorry I came the wrong way.'

'Well, go and do as Hatford told you, I see I can trust her not to pamper you.'

Ena made her courtesy and departed; the situation had been somewhat painful certainly, but it had bordered too much on the extreme, not to have its ludicrous side.

'Please show me the gardener's cottage,' she said to a stable boy she encountered.

'Crickey! yis, I'll show yer, on top coach 'us, up them steps, gardener's cottage he's there.' Ena turned away. He stepped in front of her, 'Be you new teacher? Yis? I bet a bob we's sweet-arts,' and he thrust his crimeful, evil looking face so close to hers, she drew hastily back in disgust. A sound box on the ear from a heavy hand, made him jump off his feet, as a gruff voice said, 'Stop that now, you reformatary brat, and get about yer work!' turning to Ena the man said, 'Here's the gardener's cottage 'ouse, Miss,' as he thrust his arm through a circular hole in a high board fence, and opened a gate which disclosed a cottage, standing in a vegetable garden, with some tall trees near it. It was the gardener himself; and his large family were thus cut off from 'the grounds,' as the sight of children upset the delicate organisation of Mrs Kobin.

Ena knocked timidly at the door; her reception had been so different to her anticipation, so unlike her treatment at home, where her family, though poor, were held in great respect, if only as a remnant of past

## ENA

standing. She knew how little the dear old clergyman and his wife there would think of sending her into their kitchen, though most of their servants had grown grey in their service. When she had gone to say 'good-bye,' they were sitting over their dessert, and had made her sit down with them and take some of the early strawberries, the dainty little old lady was dipping pounded loaf sugar, and enjoying leisurely, as they talked pleasantly and kindly to her, telling her of her grandmother Hetherington; and when she came away presenting her with a handsome 'Church Service' with her name written in it by Mr Hiller's tremulous, but dear old hand. It all passed before her, as she waited at the door of the cottage.

Children's voices outside, no sound within; she knocked louder. 'Come in!' shouted the pleasantest voice she had heard since she left home. What a long time that seemed, and yet it was only some ten or twelve hours since she had stood on the platform in Granston and said 'Good-bye' to her Mamma. 'Come in!' sang out the voice again, and she made her way to the place whence came the sound. A big, bony woman, with a clear complexion, very red hair, and strong arms, her sleeves turned up, washing the tea things; a troop of healthy children outside, and a dear baby cooing up from its cradle, the bright golden rings of hair, curling all over its pretty head.

'What a darling!' exclaimed Ena admiringly, as she stooped and kissed it. 'May I take it up?' She sat down with the baby in her lap, and told the good

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woman about her journey, and they were chatting pleasantly enough, when Ena remembered she had been sent to see to the rooms.

She told Mrs Carson this, who returned contemptuously, 'See to 'er rooms indeed, you be more the lady, then 'er; 'tend 'er rooms! hindeed!' Having thus expended her wrath upon the absent schoolmistress, she changed her tone, and said, 'They be all 'tended to, Miss; there be three rooms in this 'ouse as you be's to 'ave, till the new school 'ouse is builded by the school. You see the school be new, the parsonage be new, the gardings be new, and everythink be new. You be to board with me till the new 'ouse be made, and I 'tends to your room. 'Attie, as the servants up to the 'ouse call 'er, boards herself, least ways 'er say 'er do, but 'er eats most times right in the parsonage kitchen, and 'er keep don't corst 'er nothink to speak on, 'er's good side o' cook; but cook and me don't hitch, so 'er chucks hout all the scraps, and there be no pickin's for me.'

Ena looked round at the perfect cleanliness of everything, and asked her how she could do it all, with the children so small.

Presently Mrs Carson brought in a large wash-tub, it was Saturday night, called the youngest from outside, undressed it, and gave it a good scrubbing down. The child seemed used to it, and made no demur: she put on its clean night-gown, heard it say its prayers, and sent it upstairs to bed. The same process followed with several others, the water being changed each time. Then the two eldest girls came in, got their own water,



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bathed each other, said their prayers, and off to bed, all like so many soldiers on drill.

Ena sat there with the baby in her lap, resting and getting very sleepy in the warmth of the fire.

'Now if you be likin' a bath, I'll carry it up for you,' said Mrs Carson as she laid the sleeping babe in its cradle.

Poor Ena! so dusty and tired, gladly assented. The woman picked up the tub in her strong arms, carried it up stairs, took up water, left her a small piece of candle, said 'good-night,' and Ena was alone.

Her first impulse was to cry, but she resolutely put back the tears, read a psalm, said her usual prayers, took her welcome bath, and had very soon forgotten the fatigues and troubles of the day in a sound sleep which lasted till morning.

Miss Hatford spent her evening in the servants' hall playing cards, had supper with them, and came to her room between eleven and twelve rather stup' from much beer.

## CHAPTER X

ENA opened her eyes in the morning on a little white-washed room, a table covered with a snowy cloth, a small swing mirror upon it, the whole embellished by bright wool mats, one on either side, with an empty scent bottle planted exactly in the centre of each; one chair; a strip of carpet by the bed, a washstand, and an iron camp bedstead painted green and touched up with gilding; a white dimity curtain falling on each side of the head, from a pole above; and curtains of the same at the small latticed window. All was spotlessly clean, which made amends to a girl of her tastes, for the scantiness of everything.

After sleepily taking in her surroundings, she jumped out of bed, and proceeded to take note of the outdoor arrangements as seen from an upper window.

Yes, everything was painfully new, nothing old but the elms near the cottage; on all else the morning sun shone without a shadow. A few shrubs on either side of the drive to the front door of the parsonage, which was built in the Elizabethan style of architecture, as were the out-houses and the gardener's cottage. The ornamental trees, newly planted, were struggling for existence in the reddish soil, so different from the black loam of the Fens.

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Grassmore had only lately been raised to the dignity of a separate parish, and hundreds of acres of furze common hemmed it in on every side, apparently irreclaimable. There the Gipsies lay in their picturesque camps, and robbed the woods of game, as well as sticks with which to cook it; while the women went round to the houses, told fortunes, sold clothes pegs, baskets, and small odds and ends of lace, shoe ties and so on, and begged old clothes and broken victuals.

Ena dressed herself carefully, plaited her hair, its shining braids covering the back of her head. Her dress was a light grey with neat linen collar and cuffs of white.

'Well, to be sure, you be as bright as the morning,' was Mrs Carson's greeting.

A voice called from upstairs, 'Hetherington!' Ena flushed. Mrs Carson said, 'Don't you go, you beant 'er servant, and yer brekfas be all ready.'

Ena went quietly and presented herself. Miss Hatford was sitting up in bed, her hair hanging round in a dishevelled condition, it was plainly to be seen there had been no brushing and plaiting over-night. She looked at the girl, and in spite of herself said more gently, 'Ena, set my table, and make me some tea and toast ready for when I come down.' She had had little to do with house work, as Betsy reigned at home, and with her mother and grandmother she had been accustomed to a nicely, not to say daintily laid table.

Mrs Carson showed her the room, which was to be their joint sitting-room and study. Ena took out a

## ENA

badly folded brown cotton table-cloth, and as there was no other, she put it upon the little round table. In a small chiffoniere she found a cup and saucer and plate, a piece of butter on another plate, a home made loaf, and a little jam in a tumbler. She made the tea and then the toast, leaving it dry; then she went to her own breakfast. They gave her some nicely cut bread and butter, a fresh laid egg, a cup of tea without milk, and some nice crisp lettuce, on a little table to herself. The plate and cup and saucer were of china, the cloth of white linen, though very old, and she relished her breakfast as the young and healthy know how to. She would have liked another slice of bread and butter, but as Mrs Carson had put everything away and seemed to think the supply had been ample, Ena said nothing.

Miss Hatford had to pass through the Carson's general room to go to her little sitting-room. She had on a painfully bright green silk dress, one she had had for her sister's wedding two or three years before, and its frills and furbelows were out of date; she said in a loud voice, with never a 'good morning' to the Carsons, 'Bring in my breakfast, Ena.'

'Be'ant our cat's ears big,' remarked Mrs Carson in a stage whisper, before the door had time to bang. Carson laughed uneasily, he had witnessed 'tongue-bangings,' as he called them between the two women, which made him uncomfortable.

Ena carried in the tea and toast. 'Why didn't you butter it hot?' she asked complainingly, 'I suppose it's taken in at home in a silver toast rack,' she added with

## ENA

a mincing air. To which Ena replied, 'Yes, Miss Hatford, Betsy always takes it in that way, but I couldn't find one.'

'Did you look?' turning round sharply, with her mouth full of toast, she asked as well as she could. When Ena said 'yes,' she thought it was a capital joke, and said she should tell 'cook.'

Ena went to get ready for Sunday school, which commenced at half-past nine. After a few minutes she came down in a plain black silk jacket, grey hat, with a little mixture of pale green in its trimming, and grey kid gloves. She enquired in which direction the school lay, and taking up the large keys, went as directed, to open the doors, and let the children take their places.

They were far rougher and more boorish than the Fen children, and extremely unruly, especially some of the bigger boys, who were evidently 'farm hands,' and only came on a Sunday; of course they were far too manly to be kept in order by a girl, so they leaped over the desks to show how little they cared, and poor Ena was in fear for the little ones who might come in their way.

They became quiet very suddenly, and much to her relief she saw the tall form of Mr Kobin mounting the steps from the road, which lay some four or five feet lower than the ground upon which the school and church were built.

They all stood as he entered, and he said 'good-morning!' to Ena pleasantly enough, then he fidgetted

## ENA

about waiting for Mrs Kobin to come and play the hymn on the harmonium for morning prayers.

Presently he came up to Ena, and showing her the hymn beginning, 'The Church's one foundation,' asked if she could play it, adding, 'Mr Hiller said you were capable of assisting in the Church music.' She took the large hymn-book from the instrument, found the hymn and played it with full harmony and great correctness. Mr Kobin seemed pleased. Soon after Mrs Kobin and Miss Hatford came in together, both looking annoyed. Mrs Kobin had complained to Miss Hatford that her bright colours were unbecoming. Her bonnet was of blue with pink roses, certainly rather a startling effect combined with a bright green dress; but she had thought, as she expressed it, 'that now they had a bone to pick between them,' she 'would be let alone.'

'Did you have prayers without a hymn, my dear?' Mrs Kobin asked her husband.

'Oh! no. Ena played it.'

She made no reply, but went to her class with a sour expression, for she was very fond of her musical attainments, as most poor performers appear to be.

Miss Hatford called out in a voice loud enough for a room ten times as large, 'Ena, marshal the lowest division in line, take them on the gallery in the classroom, and give them a lesson on the Creation, you'll find easels and pictures in there.'

About ten minutes to eleven, the children marched two and two from the school door, by a gate opening into the churchyard, where graves were beginning to show

## ENA

themselves by a private path into the little modern church, with its single bell clanging away discordantly from the small turret at the west end, where a man sat pulling away at the rope, on a seat by the wall. It had a very depressing effect upon Ena after the ringing chimes from the old belfry at home. Then there was the harmonium, weakly played by Mrs Kobin, who considered all ends served when she played treble and bass, never concerning herself with the full harmony of voluntary, chant or hymn. How she missed the pealing tones of the great pipe organ that Mr Hiller had presented to the home church many years before, which sent the waves of harmony rolling aloft through the time-worn and lofty rafters, and among the arches and pillars of that grand old pile, the church of St Clement's at Skifton.

The choir consisted of three men ; the bass, looking through enormous spectacles, and making a great display of his music-books, as though he thought every one else ought to be as astonished as he was, to think he knew anything about them, rolled out his deep and unctuous, but somewhat unruly voice ; an unassuming tenor, who sang very correctly, but in an extremely thin voice ; and the third, a man who led the trebles (some boys and girls), by 'ear' ! No one could complain that the beauty of the music distracted their attention from the solemnity of the service.

But the prayers were the same, and the home feeling they brought to the lonely child, made the tears spring to her eyes. 'Dear Grandma is saying the same, and thinking of me I know,' she said to herself, and as the

## ENA

service proceeded she gained strength and resolution to meet the trials and humiliations which lay before her. 'I won't give up, God helping me, I'll fight it through, and not disappoint her,' she said over and over again as she thought of the dear old lady.

It was evident some of the families from the country seats, Ena had noticed nestling among the trees, were there. They eyed the 'new teacher' closely, and one lady said to another, 'that poor child will have a bad time of it with Mrs Kobin, she's far too bright and pretty to suit her.' They all knew how jealously Mrs Kobin guarded against anything 'bright and pretty,' and knew that poor Mr Kobin paid a heavy penalty for his (as he had thought) easily acquired wealth.



## CHAPTER XI

WITH all her vulgarity, Miss Hatford was a clever teacher, and Ena soon found herself making a very different progress to that with the good school-master, who had always excused badly prepared lessons on account of music to practise, or school needle-work to be prepared for next day, and Harry, who had taken his 'fifth year' papers when she had taken hers as candidate, had worked out her knotty mathematical points, with more kindness than discretion; and had always been her staunch friend ever since she had told upon herself, and not on him, about the torn map.

He had been studying Latin and Greek with the curate at Skifton, and was to enter at St Augustine's, Canterbury, to read for Holy Orders, and become a missionary. It was astonishing what a 'power of words' the lad had, and when he would give a lecture, as they called a short address, at one of the weekly 'Penny Readings' the elders would shake their heads, and tell each other how they 'remembered him, when he was a little chap in petticoats.' He was as full of fun as ever, but a good, hard-working boy. He was quite a good organist too, all his studies seemed to come to him so easily, but being both clever and industrious,

## ENA

and likewise in sturdy health, it was only likely they would. He was the apple of his mother's eye, and she encouraged him in all good things, mental, moral, and physical; a mother to be remembered with love and reverence through life.

Ena felt the lack of refinement in her surroundings and the people among whom she was thrown, keenly; but she would tell herself it wouldn't last long, each week took her nearer her goal; and being but an innocent child she wondered at their petty jealousies, and small spites.

The long harvest holidays were now approaching, it was the beginning of July, the first Saturday in August would see her off for home. She counted the weeks and days, almost the hours, till that joyful time should come.

In the meantime, another trial awaited her. As Miss Hatford and she sat at lessons after school in the little sitting-room Mr and Mrs Kobin entered, looking as though weighty matters were on the tapis. Ena rose and placed chairs, Mrs Kobin seated herself, but carefully avoided looking at the girl, and Miss Hatford had evidently expected them.

'Ah!—Ah!' said Mr Kobin, turning to Ena and clearing his voice. which by the way, was rather a disappointing one from a man of his stature, being thin and powerless, 'Miss Hatford has no doubt prepared you for our coming?'

'Oh! no Sir!' returned that individual, seeing an opportunity to ingratiate herself with the powers that were, 'I felt too much hurt to say a word to her about it.'

## ENA

Ena looked in astonishment from one to the other, what had she done? she soon found out.

'You seem to think it is not of much consequence,' continued Mr Kobin, addressing Ena, solemnly, 'I must say I had thought better things of you, you—ah'—he stammered as his wife cast a sharp glance at him, 'after, ah—all our kindness to you, I, ah—cannot speak too strongly of the insult you have offered us in return.' He paused to give his words effect, and then went on in the same measured, pompous tone. 'You have always treated everyone here as if they were beneath you, Miss Hatford says; especially our trustworthy servants, and now,' he seemed to choke with the idea, 'you presume to say unjust and vicious things of us,' he was warming to his subject, he turned suddenly to Ena and demanded 'Do you deny having done so?'

Thus appealed to Ena stood before them and said, 'If anything I have done or said since I came here, has been taken for pride or rudeness, I am very sorry, as I am sure I did not do it intentionally.'

'That goes round the question,' returned he sharply, 'did you, or did you not say those rude, abominable things of us?'

She began to see she was accused of something she knew nothing of, and asked if they would tell her what she had done to annoy them in particular.

Mrs Kobin sniffed indignantly, and Miss Hatford smiled knowingly.

'You said that Mrs Kobin was an ugly, jealous old woman, and as she couldn't get any one to have her, had paid me seven hundred pounds a year to marry her.'

## ENA

'I couldn't have said that, Sir,' returned Ena earnestly, 'for I didn't know Mrs Kobin had given you money to marry her.'

It was an unfortunate speech, for although it carried conviction to Mr Kobin, only seemed to irritate his wife.

'So you expect us to believe such a tale as that, do you?' she said spitefully, 'call Mrs Carson, this impudent girl said it to her!'

Mrs Carson came in, and Ena looked at her with a smile, but was surprised to find she avoided her look. She began to wonder, if only half listening to many of the unwise things this woman said so frequently, she had assented to something of the kind.

'Now my good woman,' said Mr Kobin, 'just tell us word for word what this ah!—girl—said.'

She repeated the very words Ena had been accused of saying, and stood shifting from one foot to the other, looking very red and uncomfortable. An extra screaming and noise from the children gave her an excuse for escape. They waited in the silence that followed for her return, but as she did not put in an appearance they amused themselves by questioning Ena.

Of course she told them it was all a mistake, she had neither said nor thought anything of the kind. They were determined not to believe her; so she remained silent. When Mr Kobin said, 'Go to your room for an hour, and think over this evil speaking and lying of yours, and if you are capable of prayer, ask God to soften your stubborn heart,' she felt as if the third commandment had been broken, and His great name taken in vain. 'When you have become re-

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pentant, I will see you in my study ; till then, for one hour, mind, we leave you to your own thoughts.'

She turned and left them, seeking the shelter of her room, feeling stunned and crushed by their injustice, and powerless to help herself. She threw herself, face downwards, upon her little white bed, and gave way to the sobs of grief which shook her frame, and prevented her from hearing the opening and closing of the door. A hand laid on her head made her start, and looking up she saw Mrs Carson standing by.

'Don't 'ee take on so, Miss Ena, don't 'ee now, it do make me feel unkind. I did know 'ee wouldn't tell on me. Don't 'ee tell on me deary, 'cause Carson'll be turned out o' place, and he be sich a stiddy man, and if he be turned away, he'll get no character, and he couldn't git another place, and all them poor children would be starved, mos'ly gels as they be. I hed to say as it be'd you, and I be sure 'ee won't tell, but I couldn't look 'ee in the face, so I couldn't,' and throwing her apron over her head, she began to cry.

She rambled on, almost in a whisper, and Ena gathered that Miss Hatford, in passing through the Carson's room, had overheard this choice piece of gossip imparted by Mrs Carson to a neighbour ; and as we know there was a feud between the two women, had immediately told it to the head housemaid, who acted as lady's-maid too, and she in her turn, was delighted to have such a piece of news to use against Mrs Carson. The latter, in her turn, had been 'carpeted' as she called being sent for to Mr Kobin's

## ENA

study, and to save herself, said she was only repeating what Ena had told her.

She again begged of Ena not to tell upon her, and as the poor child knew what the consequence to the family would be, she promised.

An hour later, when she entered the study at the parsonage and met Mr and Mrs Kobin, she made no defence, simply saying, people always believed her at home, and she thought when her Grandma knew, she would wish her to have the apprenticeship transferred.

This Miss Hatford would not hear of, as Ena was getting very useful both in school and out; and when the house was finished, which would be upon their return after the holidays, she intended to have Ena's eight shillings per week board money herself; she knew she would not be likely to get it from any local pupil teacher.

So that storm blew over, but it left a rankling in the heart of Mrs Kobin, who never lost an opportunity of making Ena suffer for it. If the choir broke down, as it frequently did, it was all Ena's fault, for she could sing out if she chose, but she hadn't chosen to; if the responses flagged it was on Ena's side; and so on, indefinitely. But she felt she was suffering in a good cause, and had some of the satisfaction of a martyr, which feeling seems inherent in some of the truest feminine natures, and consoles them for much.

## CHAPTER XII

AFTER the old Postman, who came from Reading on foot every morning with the mail, had handed Ena a letter, she took from it a small note enclosed for Miss Hatford. It was an invitation to spend some of her vacations at Skifton. She acknowledged it very condescendingly to Ena, and said she would 'see about it.'

'Shall I send any message to Mamma?' asked Ena, knowing how Mrs Hetherington would resent any discourtesy.

'You can say I'll come if I feel like it, and have no better place to go to.'

Her rudeness scarcely surprised Ena, and putting the message in as polite a form as possible, she sent it home; telling them at the same time the day and the hour, she expected to be at Granston Station.

When it came to hours, Ena thought the last twenty-four would never end.

A cab had been ordered from Reading to take them to meet the half-past seven train to London, and Ena was ready long before its arrival. It cost six shillings, but each paid half the amount, and the early drive through the valleys, and up the hill-sides, covered with the ripening corn, sparkling with dew, and bright with

## ENA

sunshine, was very refreshing, and made Ena feel as though all the world should be out to enjoy it.

Arrived at Waterloo Station, Miss Hatford put her in a cab, told her how much to pay the cabman, and left her to take care of herself. At Shoreditch there was a long line of passengers crowding each other at the ticket-office, and Ena felt afraid if she waited till the last the train might start before she had procured her ticket. A powerful-looking gentleman, whose turn it was to pass in next behind the little fence, that protected the wicket, seeing her look of distress as she eyed the long line of people, made room in front of him, and allowed her to pass in next. It was an express train, and would be in Granston shortly before four o'clock.

The gentleman overtook her on the platform, and said, 'You travel a long way alone for one so young and inexperienced.'

'Yes sir,' she said shyly, 'and thank you for letting me get my ticket first, I was so afraid I shouldn't be in time, and I don't know where any one lives in London.'

'I saw you were afraid,' he returned laughingly. 'Here porter I label this young lady's luggage, and put her in a compartment by herself.'

The porter touched his hat respectfully, and did as he was told. The gentleman nodded to Ena, and got into a first-class carriage himself.

What a pleasant journey to Ena, alone in her compartment, which the guard had locked; everything wore a holiday aspect, and neither dust, smoke nor noise could annoy her.



## ENA

A 'compartment' of an English railway carriage consists of a space divided off from the width of the carriage from side to side, containing in the Second class a long seat, also from side to side, upholstered on the seat and partly up the back, as high as the head would reach, in cloth or leather; each limited to five persons who sit facing each other, and with a door opening on either side, from which to reach the platform and which door is always securely locked by the 'Guard' before leaving a station.

Arrived at Granston, there was Mamma to meet her, and the familiar Joggy waiting patiently in the station yard. The tall gentleman who had been kind to Ena in London, took off his hat to Mrs Hetherington, and said pleasantly, 'I was sure that was a Hetherington's face, and looked after her for you, she was alone at Shoreditch; I'd see she had an escort next time, if I were you, Mrs Hetherington.'

'Why, that is Sir Richard Bent. All our folks always voted for him, you know, we are staunch Conservatives,' and she raised her head proudly, she hadn't the least idea of what was meant by the term. 'But what did he mean by saying you were alone at Shoreditch, I thought your governess was with you. I must speak to her, when she comes.'

Ena smiled at her mother's idea of Miss Hatford, and that person's idea of herself: and excused her by saying, 'Miss Hatford was in a hurry to meet her friends, so she put me in a cab, and told me what to do, and you see Mamma, here I am safe and sound.'

But Mrs Hetherington didn't seem quite satisfied,

## ENA

and wanted to continue the subject. Ena was stroking Joggy's black nose, and shining neck, 'You don't know how hungry I am, Mamma! and so thirsty! I've had nothing since five o'clock this morning, and then I was too excited to eat much; couldn't we go to the pastry cook's and get some of those nice tarts, and a glass of lemonade. I used to think of that shop sometimes, and it made me feel hungry.' Truth to tell, Mrs Carson never over-fed her, and she generally felt on rising from her little table, that she could have eaten more; but the good woman always assumed she had had an enormous appetite to have consumed what had been provided, and she felt a little uncomfortable at leaving empty plates.

So away they went, Ena chatting and laughing in almost uncontrollable good spirits. Mrs Hetherington allowed her to choose whatever she wished, and after a hearty lunch they turned homewards, and the dusty, sunny road seemed a perfect 'haven of rest,' after the constant and petty trials of the past few months, which to her sensitive nature had been nothing less than one long torture.

She drove Joggy herself, and under the influence of her good spirits, and a touch or two of the whip, his jog was a little quicker than usual.

'There's the Church Tower!' she exclaimed, when they were about half-way home, for it reared its eighty feet of masonry above the surrounding country. Ay! a tower which had stood through storm and sunshine for centuries, and from which its chime of bells has sent forth wild music, carried hither and thither by the

## ENA

boisterous gales that blow off the coast, when the yule log is blazing, and the families are gathered together for their Christmas or New Year festivities, while on the raging waters of this perilous coast many a mariner, with memories of such cheer in his heart, toils at the icy ropes, and often, alas! only too often perishes in the heaving waters, or still more treacherous Goodwin Sands. But come to this tower on some clear summer's day, and climb its gloomy, corkscrew stairway of well-worn stone, where doubtless many a monk has trodden in days gone by, and whose influence still works around you till you almost fancy you see the 'cowled head' passing in at some dark entrance. Wind on, and on, your light coming in from an occasional unglazed loop-hole in the thick masonry, which only serves to reveal the gloom, the cobwebs large and shadowy like the wings of some evil one spread in the corners, the very particles of dust which rise and float round you mayhap are some of the component parts of those very monks of yore. Now emerge suddenly upon the summit in the broad light of day, where you stand blinking and rubbing your eyes, trying to regain the use of them, and as that sense returns your fancies of a few moments before vanish, and you survey from your vantage ground the panorama spread before you of flat alluvial land, even as the top of a table, the fields, farmhouses, orchards, clumps of trees, ditches innumerable, a few hedgerows, church spires, steeples, and towers scattered over the land, (none equalling in height, size, or age the one upon which you stand); the sails of the wind-mills leisurly turning, some to grind the corn, others to pump

## ENA

the water from the large drains, over the dykes, into the Wash or the Ouse; the long lines of dusty roads shining whitely in the sun, the 'old Roman Bank,' as they call it, covered with grass, and rising some twenty feet above the surrounding country, being a remnant of the old road built by the Romans. Then cast your eyes upon the waters, which sparkle so peacefully in the sunlight, looking too innocent to be capable of the tragedies they hide, and you see the ships passing to and fro from the harbour, their sails spread and filling to the breeze, or the long line of smoke, like a blot upon the fair scene, which marks the track of a steamer. Ay! it is a goodly sight on a summer's day from this old tower of St Clement's Church.

'There's the school!' again exclaimed Ena, jumping up in her excitement, as she saw Mrs Linwood outside, waving her handkerchief to them as they turned the corner.

Once more home! and jumping down by the dear old-fashioned house, running in and hugging Grandma till the tears came, kissing the little ones. Oh! how happy she was! Sam looked shyly on refusing the proffered kiss, and John shouted from his tree-top.

Betsy was delighted to see her, and had prepared such a delicious 'high tea,' Ena was hardly able to do justice to it, after her lunch at the pastry cook's.

Ena soon found John was more unruly than ever, had refused to go to school because Mr Linwood had caned him for something, which no doubt he had deserved,

## ENA

and had kept Sam home with him. Their long holidays were now on, so she resolved to try her powers of persuasion on them before she went back to Grassmore, especially as she found the home school would begin a week before her own.

### CHAPTER XIII

THAT night Mrs Linwood and Annie, Bessie Freeman, and Mattie Flint, a very tall girl for her age, and a clever pianist, all came in. Grandma had come across a second-hand Broadwood piano when Ena was taking music lessons, had bought it, and given it to her for her very own. She was rattling off a simple, catching Schottiche, when a sudden silence ensued; looking over her shoulder she saw her Mamma, coquettishly holding up one corner of her apron, and tripping out some pretty steps of her girlhood. They all clapped, when she stopped for want of breath, and begged for more. It was such an unwonted performance on the part of Mrs Hetherington, that Grandma laughed behind her silver-rimmed spectacles, till she had to take them off to wipe away the tears.

They sang their old songs, played their old duets, ate nuts and fruit, and drank a little home-made currant wine, then tired out, dispersed at half past ten, delighted with themselves and every one else. The girls promised to return on Monday morning, and arrange for a picnic on the sands. Accordingly, Monday morning found them there at nine o'clock, but Ena was not yet down, so they all trooped upstairs to her room, and squatting in various attitudes on the bed, they discussed with becoming gravity, the proposed picnic.

## ENA

The sands they wished to go to were some seven miles off. Ena was to take Joggy, Bessie also had a little pony carriage. Mattie's brother, a young doctor, had a horse and gig, but that was out of the question, for said Mattie, with lively recollections of that animal's capers, 'He is so spirited, I'm afraid to ride behind him with Alf, and we could do nothing with him; then the gig would only hold three, if we crowded ever so.'

Ena's two brothers and sisters must go, half-a-dozen or so of Annie's young brothers, and Bessie's lame sister. 'Let's see, how many will that be?' They counted up fifteen at least. Seven or eight could go in the waggonette, and four in Bessie's carriage; but that left a possible four or five still to be provided for, and then there were the provisions.

'Gent will lend us his donkey cart, and we can put the rest of them in that,' and then cried the girls as they sprang to their feet, 'Ho! for the sands, the salt water, and the samphire!'

They ran downstairs, and Ena jumped out of bed, took a cold dip, and was soon among them, bright and merry, a very different girl to the old-looking serious Ena Grassmore was familiar with.

This was Monday morning, they decided to have their picnic on Wednesday, if all was well, and then they could make their cakes to-morrow.

They agreed as to what each should provide, stayed for the one o'clock dinner loitered and chatted and whiled away the afternoon in croquet under the trees; then Annie persuaded Ena to go with her to tea,

## ENA

promising to come with one of her little brothers and see her home in the evening.

Next day the girls were busy making cakes and pies, bread and buns, sausage rolls and tea cakes, and each had a pretty well stocked hamper. A kettle for tea a large stone jar for milk, and a cup and plate for each completed the arrangements. They intended to sugar and milk their tea right in the big kettle, and pour it out as they required. Grandma said she thought Betsy ought to go with them to look after things. Betsy pleaded much work, and indeed she was right, for Ena's clothes needed a good bit of washing. She said she 'never knew Miss Ena to "dish" her clothes out like it before.' They had no idea of the menial work the poor child had been put to, even lighting the school fires and sweeping out, when the elder girls were unwilling to do it. She did not tell them this, judging rightly, that the work did her no harm, besides spoiling her clothes, and leaving her absolutely no time for the practice of her music.

Her Grandma made inquiries about the music, and finding she had had no practice, said she should see she had a teacher upon her return, and write to Mr Kobin and make arrangements about time for it as well as practice. The old lady had been delighted with the progress made by her granddaughter, and did not intend her to lose the benefit of it.

Bessie Freeman now came bounding in, too excited to wait for her knock to be answered. 'Oh! Mrs Howel, Eliza and her husband came in from Newcastle this afternoon, and James says he wants to go too, to-



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morrow, and so does Eliza, and I came to see if you would mind.'

'That's just what I wanted,' and the dear old lady breathed a sigh of relief, 'I was afraid to let all you hair-brained young creatures go out the entire day on those dreadful marshes. I'm always imagining you getting into a quicksand; and then you know such miles of tide come up all at once, you might forget the time and be caught as King John and his hired soldiers were.'

'Would you believe it, Mrs Howel, but old Jarvis was saying last night, he's sure he knows where the treasure chests of King John are hidden; it's right in a quicksand he says, the same those young men were caught in, you remember? Well, he feels sure if we could by any means get down in that far enough, we'd find the chests and the skeletons of the soldiers lying on top. I told him there'd be no skeletons after all this time, but he shook his head and told me "the young ones don't know better than their elders if they think they do."'

Old Jarvis was an aged pensioner of Waterloo, who used to tell dreadful tales of that fight, one thing was that in the height of the battle he was standing in his square, being in the infantry, behind the first line which was kneeling, and human blood flowed over his ankles, and when he sank down near the ending, wounded, his one sensation was that its warm and shiny moisture was enveloping him. It was worse than the faint smell of it, mixed as it was with the suffocating stench of the powder. He considered himself an authority on any

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and every subject where the words 'soldier' and 'army' were concerned, and he was fully convinced he could find the treasure of King John if only his 'feet would let him.' He had been wounded in his feet, was very small and very spare, but for all his eighty odd years, kept his faculties, except at times he seemed inclined to exaggerate the horrors of the wars through which he had passed, although the one fact of the blood having flowed over his ankles he had maintained ever since he had returned to his native place.

'Ah!' said Grandma, 'I can't forget that terrible time when those six or seven young men were found, standing not far from each other, caught in that quicksand and held until the advancing tide had drowned them, and after it receded and people went to look for them, there they stood, the crabs clinging to their clothes and hair, within a few feet of each other, as no doubt each had gone to assist the others and been himself held there, especially as all their watches had stopped within several seconds of each other. Really, I always pass a dreadful day, when you young folks are disporting yourselves "down the Marsh."

'But you know Grandma, those particular sands where the young men were caught, are in an opposite direction to the ones we go to. Ours are by the estuary of the Ouse, theirs out more in the Wash; no one ever was known to get entangled in ours.'

'Besides,' said Bessie, 'Mrs Linwood told us if we went on the sands at ten in the morning, the tide would be receding, and wouldn't return till about the same time at night.'

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So they coaxed and soothed the old lady's fears, and she promised not to worry, especially as Mr and Mrs Watson were to be there.

The two girls went out and sat under the orchard trees, to chat whilst the Grandma took her 'forty winks' as she called her after dinner nap.

'Ena,' said Bessie, after sitting for a while in thoughtful silence, 'I wonder what makes Mrs Howel so very nervous about our going to the sands?'

'I'll tell you what I think it is. You know most of her people were connected with the shipping in Granston. Grandfather was Captain of the 'Ena' for many years, and owner as well. It was his father's ship in fact. Great-grandfather had it built, and named it after his Scotch wife. He met her on one of those little islands north of Scotland, when his ship was wrecked there, as he was going north on a whaling expedition. I have heard them say he was a little man, with very dark hair and eyes. I know great-grandmother was what they call a splendid woman, she was very broad and tall and straight, as I remember her. When she was young her hair was a light auburn, her skin very white and clear, Grandma says and her eyes were so darkly blue, they appeared to be black at first sight. She used to sit in Grandma's house in Granston, or rather it was her house, in a high-backed easy chair, always with some knitting in her hand. The only thing that failed her, was her eyesight, and when she dropped a stitch Grandma had to come and take it up for her. Such fine knitting it always was too. Or if she forgot the count in any

## ENA

fancy knitted lace, it had to be counted for her. She always looked so nice, too. She was very fond of what she called 'Quaker colours,' you know soft browns and greys, and stone colour. Her gowns were all made after the pattern they had been made for at least forty years, with large "leg-o'-mutton" sleeves, and a plain white muslin, or, for great occasions, a real lace "kerchief" crossed over her breast, a cap with a fluted lace frill round her bonny face, had a high crown at the back, always of white, and tied under her chin with pale purple or lavender or white "love ribbon." That thin silk ribbon you can see through.'

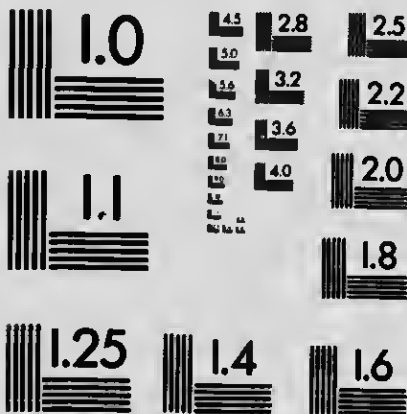
Ena paused, as if lost in the picture of the past she had called up, when Bessie said, 'How tedious it must have been for her to sit all day long, and not go anywhere.'

'Oh! she didn't sit all day long; I must tell you they kept very regular hours. They took breakfast at seven every morning. Then Great-grandma, Grandfather and Grandmother all went for a walk if the weather was fine about ten o'clock. They had dinner at twelve, and Great-grandma always took a long nap after it. About three they all went for another walk, and came home to tea at four. Then their relations and friends came in to see them, Grandfather and Grandma went out together or separately, as they wished, and often some friend or friends stayed and took supper with them at nine o'clock. Some times at this meal they had oysters, generally cold meat or fowl left from dinner, and home-brewed ale. You know how nice Grandma can brew it yet. In bed by ten. On Sundays



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## ENA

and prayer-meeting nights they always went to Chapel, Great-grandma too, for she was a regular member of the Wesleyans for more than forty years. Her father had been a Minister of the old Scotch church, and there being no such church in Granston, she had finally joined the Wesleyans, as being the strictest sect, and most like her own church. They were very strict in those days, and even regulated the colours the women of the congregation should wear. As it happened nothing could have suited Great-grandma better than those same "Quaker colours," for I've heard father say, she had such lovely colouring of her own. I am telling you this story rather "end first," as Grandma would say.'

'Oh, never mind that,' returned Bessie, 'do go on.'

'Grandma told me that after one of those severe storms they have in the Orkneys, Great-grandma was out on the beach watching a ship go to pieces. They could render no assistance, only several of the men, (Great-grandfather amongst them), were washed ashore lashed to some of the rigging. Great-grandma waded in as far as possible, she knew all the shore by heart, and dragged him out of reach of the waves. She unlashed him, picked him up, and carried him to the cottage where she lived with her brother, and where she helped him to eke out the living he made as school-master, by that same fine knitting I told you about. They both worked over him till he showed signs of life. When he was well, he wouldn't go south without her, so they were married, and he named his new ship after her. He always said she brought him

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good-luck, for he made lots of money after that, every voyage to the whale fisheries being successful. Grandma says most times when he returned there was another little Howel waiting for him to see it. They had ten boys who grew up, ranging in height from Great-uncle Sam, who was five feet six, to Great-uncle Robert, who stood six feet six. They all followed the sea, two being lost when quite young, and the rest, with the exception of Grandfather, settled in different parts of the world; except that favourite nephew of his that used to be mate for him so long, and who sailed the "Ena" after him. He wasn't so lucky as Grandfather though. I don't know if you know about him, I'm only just coming to the part about the sands, and why Grandma has such a dread of them.'

'Do go on,' urged Bessie, 'if you don't mind?'

'It's a very sad story. This nephew grew up with Grandfather and Grandma; they looked upon him as their own son, for his father was one of the brothers who were lost at sea. He was only a baby, when his mother married again, and they took him.

'Well uncle James used to trade between Granston and Newcastle mostly, and he fell in love with a young lady there, the sister of a friend's wife. They were married, and he wrote to Grandma to say they were coming home on the "Ena," as they were to live with her and Great-grandma, at least for a while. He wrote such a bright, merry letter, Grandma has it yet, in which he says his Lucy wouldn't leave all her kith and kin behind, so she was bringing her favourite niece with her, a little girl four years old, just a year older than I



## ENA

was then. That was the very last we ever heard of them or the ship for three years.

'Then one day Grandma was crossing the West Granston ferry, and some seamen were talking about a ship lately found almost buried in the sands. She was being dug out, they said, and the skeletons of a woman and a little girl about four years of age were found in the captain's cabin, together with their clothes, not one skeleton of a man was found. The sailors were of opinion they had all died at their posts, or been washed overboard.

'Grandma gave a great cry, and then fainted, and had to be carried ashore. She never speaks of it, but she never really got over the shock, coming as it did, so soon after Grandfather's death.'

'I don't wonder Mrs Howel dislikes anything to do with the sands; but I suppose the wreck occurred farther out to sea.'

'No, only a few miles from the place where the young men were drowned, just outside the Estuary. Captain Howel must have been making for the river, only a few miles from home.'

'Did they do anything with the skeletons?' inquired Bessie, with breathless interest.

'Yes, Grandma and father had them brought home to the house where aunt Lucy should have come as a welcome bride, and they were buried together in St John's churchyard; there they erected over them a column of white marble snapped asunder, with a drooping lily carved near the foot. Lily was the name of her little niece.'

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'I've seen it, it was one of the last monuments put there; soon afterwards the new cemetery was made outside the city.'

'Yes; Great-grandma drooped after that, and soon passed away, for she was nearly a hundred years old. She thought so much of her "boy," as she called uncle James. She was knitting some specially handsome stockings for aunt Lucy, with pretty open-worked ankles for her to wear with sandals. They were put away with the needles in, and I saw them in Grandma's "relic drawer" this morning; the needles were rusted in the work.'

The girls said little for a while, but sat thinking; then they bade each other an affectionate 'goodbye,' till the morning.

## CHAPTER XIV

EIGHT o'clock, and all ready for a start. They drove to the Linwood's first, and there stowed away five boys in the back of the wagonette with Hattie and Jessie, whilst Annie and Ena occupied the front seat. Mr and Mrs Watson were already there trying to persuade Mr and Mrs Linwood to join them, as they had procured a conveyance that would carry them and the youngest Linwood easily. So they soon passed the loaded wagonette and Joggy. Mattie went with Bessie Freeman and her sister. The donkey cart had started half an hour before with John and Sam and the hampers of good things, and they did not overtake it till they were nearly at the dykes.

The landscape was flat and uninteresting enough, only broken by a few scattered trees, or a farm house standing near its rickyard. The road lay for several miles along the top of the old Roman Bank, which still forms one of the best among the almost perfect roads of Norfolk and Lincolnshire; being raised as it was some twenty feet above the low lying marshes, it must have been a great boon to the inhabitants in bygone ages, and before macadamized roads were known.

The busy forms of the reapers here and there, the men cutting with scythes, the women coming

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behind and tying the sheaves, leaving them scattered over the fields. Some women cutting with a scap hook, and leaving a higher 'stubble' than the men, children doing their part both in reaping and binding the sheaves, all working as if dear life depended upon the speed with which they cut, bound, and shocked the grain. As indeed it does, pretty much, for these people cut at so much per acre, consequently the winter's comfort depends on how much they get through with. It is really wonderful how they stand the heavy and continued work, from daylight which is very early at this time of the year, to darkness which comes quite late. Many of them do the 'shocking,' that is standing the sheaves two and two with their heads together and lower ends apart, in double lines of from eight to twelve, by moonlight; when the weary women and children have dragged themselves home to cook supper. Happy the labourer's family who at these times possesses a little two-wheeled cart drawn by a donkey, stow they themselves away with much satisfaction, and most of the children will loll in all directions sound asleep before the sure-footed little donkey has taken many paces.

Then those who reap the land, have the first right to the gleaning, and you will see them with the bunch they have gathered in one hand resting over the small of the back as they go stooping along, picking, picking, patiently picking, ear by ear the scattered, and often scanty grain left for them. But a woman and her children will fill a sack with these closely tied 'handfuls' as they call one of these bunches, and after a long day's work, the donkey carries its owner's and the sacks of their

## ENA

neighbours home in triumph, only leaving sufficient room to stow away the youngest of the children among or upon the sacks. Failing a donkey cart of their own, or the use of a neighbour's, they balance the heavy sacks upon their heads, and walk off as erect as a pine-tree.

The men, at this time are carrying, stacking, and 'thackin' (thatching) the grain. For the best done work of the two latter the Agricultural Societies give quite substantial prizes. So that the labourers in these agricultural counties, if they are sober and industrious, are very well off. Then there are 'dowers' left in trust by different benefactors, from the proceeds of which blankets, flannels, coals, or beef are distributed at Christmas. A doctor is paid from the Poor's rate for them, who is called in for every little ache, when better class people, who have to pay for their medical aid, would hesitate to incur the expense or would use some simple home remedy. Then in this parish a parcel of land has been set on one side, and some of the most deserving, sober and industrious are allowed to use a piece at a merely nominal rent. Sometimes this patch supplies them with sufficient grist to keep them in brown bread the year round. Or they will plant it with a root crop, selling the best, and feeding a cow or pig upon the rest. Then they are allowed to feed their cows upon the roadside, so long as they are watched by some one, and not allowed to destroy the 'quick' or thorn hedges which are used where ditches are not dug, and a boy often earns sixpence or nine-pence a day, according to the number of cows he is able to look

## ENA

after, but it is a lazy job, and many an orchard is robbed for want of something better to do.

Again each parish, as a rule, is divided into districts, and is under the supervision of a lady, who sees that no sick are neglected, that the children go to Sunday school, and, as much as possible attend day school, although for the last the people have a small fee to pay.

These workers were very merry, and exchanged laughing remarks with Mr Linwood and Miss Watson as they passed. The smaller children and babies were kicking round, or sleeping in the shade of the sheaves of corn. Here and there a man with a demi-john turned upside down at his mouth, taking a good 'swig' of beer or cold tea as the case might be. Then with a large onion laid on top of a piece of fat bacon, the whole wedged between his thumb and a huge 'hunk' of bread, he would proceed to regale himself. After this 'slight refection,' he would tighten the strap round his waist, and go to work again, like a very Goliath of the Scythe.

## CHAPTER XV

ARRIVED at the sands, they unharnessed their different steeds, tethered them out to feed, and taking their lunch baskets over the dyke, deposited them in its shade. Then off came their shoes and stockings and they started to follow the tide out.

They went fully two miles, scampering in all directions, jumping the small 'cricks,' splashing each other with the salt water, shouting and laughing till their throats were tired, and they could laugh no more. Then they turned back, gathering their aprons full of samphire as they went, till they reached their starting point, where the elders were still seated talking and smoking, with the exception of Mr Watson, who, sober man of business that he was in town, seemed the wildest and gayest child amongst them.

'Back again! why it's one o'clock, and we've not unpacked the baskets yet!'

Out came the great black kettle, the youngsters scampered off to where a boat had been repaired above the tide line, and picked up some chips, and soon the fire blazed merrily. While the table, or rather tablecloth was being spread with all the good things they had brought with them, the kettle boiled. Mrs Linwood tied up some tea in a piece of muslin, put it in the kettle and allowed it to 'draw' six minutes.

## ENA

They were all quiet enough for the next ten minutes, too hungry to talk. There's nothing like the salt marshes to give people an appetite.

After lunch the men went off to see the Coast guards, whose cottages stood near, with the weck's washing flapping and cracking in the fresh breeze. The two women settled themselves for a cosy gossip, and the children picked up seaweeds and shells, chased crabs into their hiding places, dug others out, built sand castles and forts, and destroyed them, or paddled in the pools of water lying warm in the sunshine. Pleasant occupation for all, they could exercise their different propensities for fun or mischief without so much as a 'Don't Johnny!' or a 'Come now, Jessie! what will Mamma say?'

The elder girls strolled off to a place they knew of, where an old boat lay on its side. They could hang a dust rug in front, and it would make a very good dressing-room. They dawdled and chatted away an hour or more, then getting into their bathing-suits, they spent two delightful hours wading and paddling about in the warm waters of one of the larger 'cricks,' or sloughs with which the sands are intersected. The water feeling, as they said, 'like a warm soft cloak wrapping round them,' as they allowed themselves to sink into it.

They dressed leisurely, wringing out each others long wet tresses, which were left hanging down their backs. As they neared the camping-ground, a scream, or rather a succession of screams intermingling; made them run to the spot whence they came. Mrs Lin-



## ENA

wood and Mrs Watson arrived directly afterwards out of breath and terrified.

In the middle of the widest creek were Hattie and Jessie and the two smallest Linwoods, kicking and splashing and clutching each other, and screaming in chorus. They had evidently been bathing too, whilst the ladies were talking, but had done so in their clothes, and were now almost taken off their feet by the water, hence the uproar.

Two of the elder boys in tights, who had been bathing to themselves some distance off, now dashed in, and each taking two of the dripping frightened little ones, handed them up the bank without a word, and darted off again to their own sport.

What to do with them? was the next question, till some one said they saw lots of children outside the Coast guards' houses. So they were marched off there to see if any dry clothes could be borrowed. But the clothes went by contraries as the girls said, the smallest coast children being boys, and the bigger ones girls; so after much rubbing down and lots of crying, the Linwood boys appeared in petticoats and dresses, looking very much ashamed of themselves, while Hattie made a pretty sailor lad in a suit of blue serge, and Jessie was gotten up in baby clothes very much too small for her.

When they appeared in camp accompanied by the owners of the clothes and their mothers, they were received with rounds of applause, clapping of hands, and the wildest of capers on the part of the elder boys, and with screams of laughter from the girls.

## ENA

Mrs Linwood invited them all to tea, and the wives of the Coast guards were only too glad to vary the monotony of their lives for once, and talk and laugh with their kind.

Mr Linwood and Mr Watson appeared soon after, looking damp and rosy from their swim. It occurred to them to look over the dyke, in the direction of the Guard's cottages to see how they took their deserted homes. They had evidently come out from those lonely abodes, and were discussing the situation, whilst one of them swept the horizon with his 'glass,' but without effect.

'Come on Daddy, we're all here!' came from a childish voice, as a small head and shoulders appeared above the dyke; and they were not long in obeying the summons, the silent houses had had a rather uncanny effect upon them.

It was a merry meal they all took together; then putting the tired little ones on the floor of the wagonette so they might rest their heads on the cushions of the seats and sleep if they wished; the bigger ones stowed themselves away where ever they could find room, and the homeward march commenced at seven o'clock; after a day that Ena and some of the others marked as a red letter day, to look back upon in the future with pleasure.

There was no music or fun that night, 'home and to bed,' being the order of the evening, and the dear Grandma breathed a sigh of relief as she tucked them all snugly away for the night, with a thankful heart, that they had all returned safely.

## CHAPTER XVI

THE time was slipping away all too quickly in pleasant intercourse, days in long walks, and evenings in music, only ten remained. Ena's heart sank as she thought of the coming trial, but she had no idea of giving up the struggle, or of complaining. She would say to herself, 'Only three or four years, it will soon pass, and I shall be eighteen and ready for College, then I shall soon forget all this.'

'A letter for you, Miss Ena,' said Betsy. 'I have one too,' observed Mrs Hetherington, 'about you.'

Ena looked up quickly, she wondered if Mr Kobin had written about what she was supposed to have said of his wife.

'It's from cousin Joe and his sister Nancy,' continued Mrs Hetherington, 'he wants John and you and the girls to make up a party of ten or twelve, and meet them on Thursday—this is Monday—at Granston Station ready for the nine o'clock train to Hunstanton. You are to take a hamper and be prepared for a day on the sands and water there. They are going with a large party from Thorpe, some Londoners amongst them Joe says, so you must put on "your best bibs and tuckers."''

'Bibs and tuckers indeed!' laughed Annie, 'as if

## ENA

we were babies. But won't it be fun! They will be all quite grown up, like Joe and Nancy, Isn't Joe an elephant of a man, and such a tease!'

'You haven't opened your letter yet, Ena,' observed her mother.

'It's from Miss Hatford, I think,' returned Ena examining the envelope, apparently unwilling to open it.

'Well, read it, and you will be sure.'

She opened it, glanced at the signature, and then at the brief contents, and handed it to her mother.

'Dear me! visiting a college friend in Yarmouth, and is coming on here to-morrow; she might have asked if it was convenient.'

'I suppose Miss Hatford took your invitation to mean any time during the long vacation, Mamma.'

'It seems like it,' returned her mother shortly.

As the Grandma entered then, looking fresh from her 'forty winks,' the letter was passed to her. She seemed greatly pleased Miss Hatford was coming, and took no notice of the curt and somewhat 'condescending' note. She wanted to know what kind of a woman she was; her granddaughter had said so little of her, it had disturbed the good, observant old lady.

Ena began to wonder how Miss Hatford would deport herself.

'She is coming to-morrow by the ten minutes past four train; some one must meet her. Shall you go, Esther?'

'Oh! dear no, Mother, I wouldn't put myself out so much for Ena's governess, it would be too much of an

## ENA

attention, all in the afternoon's heat and dust too. It was all very well to do it for Ena.'

Ena kissed her, she never remembered hearing her mother make so much of her before.

'I can go, Mamma, and I daresay Annie would go with me, we shouldn't mind the dust and heat a bit, should we ?

So it was arranged that the two girls were to meet Miss Hatford in Granston.

They were both standing on the platform next day when the train came in. Miss Hatford alighted, shook hands with Ena, was introduced to Annie, and then looking round the dejected, almost deserted station, enquired how they were to get to Skifton.

'We came to drive you out, Miss Hatford.' said Ena leading the way to the wagonette.

'Well, that's good of you now, to hire this nice little carriage on purpose for me, but,' with a toss of her head, which set the flowers and feathers of her truly wonderful hat quivering, 'I suppose you expect me to pay half though.' She was away from Mrs Kobin now, and could wear what she liked, and her likings usually took to a brilliant hue, without regard to suitability or contrast.

Annie looked vexed, and said, 'Oh ! no, Miss Hatford, this belongs to Ena's Mamma, she uses it for driving all the time.'

Miss Hatford eyed the neat turn-out with a business-like air. The carriage had been built by a clergyman, who had lived beyond his means, and Mr Hetherington had bought it for his wife, when the clergyman's things were sold.

## ENA

She remarked to herself, 'I'll keep a civil tongue in my head, I expect Ena does belong to the better sort after all.' She elected to sit in the comfortably cushioned seats at the back, so the two girls took the front seat to drive. She spread her bright sunshade, stretched out her feet, and thought to herself, if only 'someone' she knew of was sitting ('setten' she said) there in front of her, she would be content to jog along in this way for hours.

When they arrived home, Grandma met the visitor in the hall in her neat afternoon dress of black silk, and her white widow's cap with its long wide strings hanging untied on either side, which showed to perfection her bright complexion and her still auburn hair, amongst which the threads of white were scarcely perceptible. She took Miss Hatford to her room herself, where she admired everything which was contrary to the old lady's code of good breeding, and wound up by saying, 'I don't wonder Ena treated us all as if we wasn't good enough for her.

'I shall be very sorry if Ena has not behaved herself well!' returned Grandma interrogatively.

'Oh! she behaved well enough, but Mrs Kobin thought she gave herself airs, that's all; and so did the servants.' Then she told about the invitations to the Parsonage kitchen refused by Ena, Mrs Kobin's 'spitefulness' because she thought Ena had talked about her, and many things which enlightened Mrs Howel as to the difficulties which had beset the child.

Next morning she beckoned Ena to her room, and there she opened her heart to dear Grandma telling her

## ENA

of her reason for bearing the blame of Mrs Carson's ill judged words.

She was proud of Ena's fortitude, and the quiet patience with which she had borne all her trials, for she well understood the agony it had been to her granddaughter's sensitive disposition. She determined the child should not return unless better arrangements could be made for the future.

Miss Hatford had already informed her that she was going to leave school and marry the coachman at Christmas.

Mrs Howel wrote to Mr Kobin and made arrangements through him for Ena to take music lessons every Saturday from the Organist of Caversham Church ; also that upon the completion of the school house, she should have a room to herself, and that beside the school, choir practice, her own practice of music, and her lessons out of school, no house-work, and certainly on cleaning of the school-room and lighting of fires there, should again be required of her as a part of her duties.

'It seems to me, our young lady and her friends are carrying things with a high hand,' sneered Mrs Kobin, after reading one of these letters.

'I don't see we can do any better, you know most people who apprentice their daughters to a school, can't afford to pay for them away from home ; and there's no one here who can take Ena's place. You know she works well in the school, and last examination her department was considerably above the average in successful passes. Besides, when you feel unequal to the church music, she is able to take it up a moment's notice.'

ENA

'Yes, that's the great thing ; I should never have put up with her airs and graces only for that. O! I suppose we shall have to keep her here. I only hope Hatford's successor may be better able to manage her, and keep her in her right place.'



## CHAPTER XVII

MISS HATFORD stayed a week, which she seemed to enjoy very much. She went to the Hunstanton picnic, and was greatly taken with the mighty stature and general worldly prosperity of 'cousin Joe,' who might easily have supplanted the coachman, had he been so minded. She told Mrs Howel, it would be many a long day before she got another holiday she expected, after she was married to the coachman; but she was tired of school, and meant to get out of it. She cheerfully promised to meet Ena in 'Town,' and take her down to Reading with her.

Ena had a gathering of her old friends the night before she left home. They were very merry and stayed up late for them.

'I'm afraid,' remarked Mrs Hetherington, 'you won't be up by four o'clock in the morning, ready to drive to Granston!'

'Get up at four o'clock in the morning,' laughed young Dr Flint, who had joined the youngsters early, on pretence of coming for Mattie, 'Why I'll engage to drive you there in three-quarters of an hour, if you'll trust to me, Ena.'

So after many good-bye kisses, and good wishes, they all trooped off together.

Ena slept till five, when Betsy wakened her, help'd

## ENA

her to dress, and gave her a good breakfast. Then she went and said 'good-bye' to them all in bed; and, as Alf was waiting, gave Betsy a good hug and kiss, jumped into his light gig, and was soon bowling away at a brisk rate through the bright, cool morning air. Alf set her down at the station, saw that her luggage was properly labelled and in the van, got her ticket, put her in a carriage, then with a wave of his hand and a flourish of his whip, whisked out of the station yard. Ena could not prevent a few tears falling as she watched him leave, but it was only about three months to Christmas, she told herself. 'Cheer up, it will never do to cry.' But there she sat, a dispirited little heap in her corner, till the many and increasing streets below showed her she was nearing Shoreditch.

Miss Hatford met her, and they drove together to Waterloo Station, and thence to Reading, where they were met by the coachman. He and Miss Hatford discussed their future prospects, with much zest during the drive, oblivious of all else.

They went right to the new school house, which had been finished, cleaned, and the heavy furniture, carpets and blankets, put in as part of the house. All comforts, house linen, nic-racs and so on had to be supplied by those who would occupy it.

They had both brought good hampers of groceries and provisions, and Miss Hatford asked Ena to go to the village shop and get some bread, in a very different manner to what she had done at first. After their tea, they went to work putting things in place, and arranging for Sunday.

## ENA

Then they both went to see Mr Kobin. Mrs Kobin was not well, and sent Ena a list of chants and tunes to be played for the Sunday services. This she undertook somewhat nervously, as she had no opportunity of going through them with the choir, who were liable to break down ignominiously, and if the harmonium stopped too, there would be dead silence. When they did this, the only thing to do with them was to begin over again, and it was just as likely as not they would fail again in the same place.

Miss Hatford went, as usual, to spend her evening in the parsonage kitchen, and to hear and tell all the gossip. She was very full of her visit to Ena's people, which was all duly repeated to Mrs Kobin by the head housemaid, when she waited upon her mistress.

Things went on in the same strain till Christmas, when Miss Hatford was married, and removed to a neighbouring parish, where she lived for many years, a thrifty and industrious wife and mother.

Mrs Kobin had been ordered south by the doctors for the winter. Ena had to take the church music entirely; and, assisted by the Curate in charge, the choir was much improved. This prevented her from going home during the Christmas vacation, which was a sore disappointment all round, especially to the Grandma, whose usually sturdy health seemed to be giving way. She took Ena's piano, packed it with a number of books and pretty things she set store by, and sent it to her grand-child as a Christmas present; over it Ena spent the, to her, long lonely days of the holiday, which was only two weeks. The

## ENA

monltress stayed with her, for company; and then the new school-mistress arrived. I can best describe her by Ena's letter to her Grandma.

'Miss Sonning has arrived, she is so tall, and fair, and slim; she looks as if one of our Norfolk winds would blow her off her feet and away. I don't think she is very strong, but she is so gentle and kind. I am afraid she will find the school hard to manage. She holds a much lower certificate than Miss Hatford did, and was never apprenticed as a pupil teacher, but used the little money her father left her to put herself to a training college (Bishop Stortford) where she had to remain three years, and now only holds a Third Class. "The mathematics troubled me so much," she said, in her sweet way, but she holds a Government prize for Drawing, and writes beautifully. She has brought lots of water-colour drawings and sketches, and with that precious piano, and all those books and pretty things you sent, dear Grandma, our little parlour is a "refuge for the weary" (Miss Sonning said that). She does not play, but she says it does her good to listen to me. I think she had to work very hard at college to get through. Her father was a curate; when he died she had no one left, and it was his wish that she should put herself to College and gain a Certificate, with the few pounds they had been able to save out of his small stipend. She was so afraid she might fail again, for all her money was gone in the three years training, she is almost ill with anxiety. She says we will study together, I must teach her music, and she will teach me French and Drawing too

## ENA

if you like, beside our usual lessons, I feel as if I had suddenly found a dear big sister, and she says, I shall be her dear little sister. Dearest Grandma I how happy we shall be together !'

Grandma laid down the letter, and wiped her spectacles, a feeling of utter thankfulness filling her kind old heart. She knew it would not be long before Ena would have to take the stand she had proposed for herself long ago, of protectress to the little sisters ; for, although Sam had kept to school, and was a steady, good boy, John was growing more and more unruly and selfish ; and as his mother always took his part, things began to look serious at home. The dear old lady felt that a year or two was the most she could hope for, and was laying by as much as she could, in order to help Ena out with the rest when her time should come.

Her husband in making his will, had only left the money his wife had brought him, to their daughter, the greater part of it was willed to his nephew, who we know was lost in a storm upon the Goodwin Sands ; but his wife had the interest of the whole during her life-time. Therefore the greater part of the fortune would return to the Howel family after the Grandma's death.

## CHAPTER XVIII

Mrs KOBIN's health had necessitated her residence in the south of Europe, so her husband made a flying visit, rented the parsonage, furnished as it was, to a very devout lady of wealth and position; who, by her hard work in the London slums, and her rigorous disregard of herself, had broken down her health. She brought her servants and her carriage and horses, crowding the somewhat limited accommodation of the parsonage and its offices to its fullest extent, and making an unusual stir and bustle in the quiet, rural district.

She had a serious question upon her mind and in her heart, and she thought in this quiet retreat to solve it dispassionately. Middle aged, alone and wealthy; the question was this: 'Should she throw her fortune into a sisterhood, joining it herself; or, should she continue as she had done, trying to accomplish all the good in her power single-handed?'

In the quiet and rest of Grassmore, she felt she would be able to decide.

The first Sunday she went to the little church, she could hardly take her eyes off Miss Sonning. What was there in her that took her memory back irresistibly to her own days of childhood? After all they did not

## ENA

feel so far away, and yet she had to acknowledge to middle-age, and a somewhat sallow and premature one. She made up her mind to call upon the School-mistress after hours to-morrow, and find out if she could.

Accordingly as Miss Sonning, Ena, and the Monitress sat in their snug little parlour at lessons, a loud knock at the door announced a visitor, and the Monitress ushered in 'The new lady from the Parsonage.'

Ena gathered up her books and papers, motioning to the girl to do the same, and they retired to the dining-room.

The Monitress now lived with them; she was the daughter of a farm labourer, but unusually bright and clever, with an ambition and a corresponding industry that seemed to grasp and hold any information that came in her way. Added to this she had a fine perception of right and wrong; and she possessed a soprano voice of uncommon purity and sweetness. Oral lessons to the little ones never failed to be interesting, for they were given with an earnestness and eloquence that impressed whoever heard them. She did what housework was required quietly and deftly, for her board, and the chance it gave her for study. In after years she was one of the brightest lights in the Training College to which she went by virtue of her scholarship, and where she remained as teacher of some of the higher branches to the students for many years.

When at last Miss Sonning joined them, her eyes were bright and wet with happy tears. After tea, the two friends took a long walk, whilst the Monitress

## ENA

washed and put away the tea things, swept up the hearth, and sat down to fairly devour every word of her lessons in readiness for next day.

The 'new lady from the Parsonage' had introduced herself as Miss Stevens. Miss Sonning only bowed and placed a seat for her. She remembered how that lady had looked at her in church the day before, and waited for her to speak.

'The slight of you in church yesterday, brought back to me some old memories of my childhood, which I am afraid I allowed to run away with me. I came to-day to have a talk with you, and set my mind at rest. My dearest friend, and almost sister (I had no brothers nor sisters of my own), who shared my lessons, my walks, my play and everything was so much like you, only her hair was dark, while yours is auburn.'

Miss Sonning's eyes went up to the portrait of such a woman on the wall, and Miss Stevens followed the movement. She sprang up and stood long before it, tracing out each familiar feature. Then, when she had composed herself, she returned to Miss Sonning's side, and taking her hand, said softly, 'What is your name, my dear?'

'Etheldreda,' was the response.

Miss Stevens drew her down and kissed her. 'That is my name, she gave it to you for the love of me.— Why did she never write, I wonder? Do you know anything of your mother?'

'I only know my mother was governess in a family when she was married to my father; and that she died when I was three years old. Any reference to her



## ENA

seemed to give my father so much pain, they had been so devoted to each other, that I seldom mentioned her. I know she and her baby boy were buried together. Then my father's sudden death, (her voice broke) by a railway accident when I was eighteen, prevented him telling me more, as he might have done, when he considered me old enough. It was his great wish that I should enter a Training College, and become a National Schoolmistress, as I would have to earn my living, rather than go into a family as a private Governess, he said I should have more independence. He was preparing me for the coming Christmas entrance examination.'

'Was your father a schoolmaster?'

'No! he was the curate of a small, outlying parish, near Bishop Stortford, and we had saved just money enough to put me to College for three years. He thought I could have passed the necessary examinations in two, but I was so broken down with grief the first year, I did little good.'

During their walk Miss Sonning imparted to Ena all Miss Stevens had told her of her mother, dwelling lovingly on every detail.

## CHAPTER XIX

'I WAS an only child of about twelve years of age living with my parents upon a lonely piece of property of which they had taken a long lease, on the coast of Devonshire. Soon after we moved down, a retired Naval officer took the only other place that was not a fisherman's hut, and came there also to reside, with a small grand-daughter of ten. I was so delighted when I saw her in the garden as we passed, I wanted my father to go in at once to see them; but I had to control my impatience for a few days until they were settled. Then, as Mother was an invalid, and could only go out in her bath-chair, father and I started out to call.

'Your mother was out, tying up some flowers when we arrived, and after the two gentlemen had introduced themselves, she was called in. I ran to meet her and kissed her before I could hear her name or she mine, and we went out into the garden with our arms entwined about each other's waists. I told her my name was Etheldreda, and she told me hers was Louise, after the Princess, by her grandfather's wish, as the Princess Louise was the Queen's baby then.

'My father persuaded your great-grandfather to allow Louise, or Loo, as we all called her, to share my

## ENA

lessons, and from that time we were inseparable. I had a good, conscientious governess, and after lessons we all three wandered far and wide among the rocks and on the sands of the shore, and walked for miles on the downs above.

'My life had blossomed out into true childish happiness, and so I think had hers. I found my music lessons a delight, she her drawing and sketching; which I see you also delight in, and she glanced round. Then, looking at the open piano, she asked doubtfully, if I was musical. I told her of course, that it was your piano, and that I had little aptitude for it. She seemed pleased that I was like my mother, even in that.

'We went on in this way, seeing few people beside the fisher-folk, till I was eighteen and Louise sixteen; when Mamma became so much worried, she was ordered to Naples. We shut up the house and took our old servants with us. Papa tried hard to persuade Captain Britton to allow Louise to go with us; but for once he was obstinate, and we had to leave her behind. For the first time in six years we were parted, and as it proved, never to meet again in this world.

'We corresponded regularly for a year, then, after terrible agonies, which drove even Louise from my mind for a time, my mother died. The blow was felt very severely by my father and me; we wrote to no one but travelled slowly and sadly home. Stopping here and there in an aimless way, always intending to go right on, but we lingered out some six weeks.

'When we arrived at our now desolate house, I started

## ENA

out at once to see my friend ; but, what was my dismay to find the cottage closed and empty. I went down to the hut of an old fisherman who used to do odd jobs for Captain Britton, who told me the old gentleman had died rather suddenly, and been buried a month ago, that was two weeks after we had left Naples, you see, so if your mother wrote we never got the letter. He said 'Missie' had gone somewhere to be a governess, but the vicar would tell me all about it. I went to him, intending to follow up my friend and bring her to live with us, as my father wished. I wrote to the address he gave me, wrote again and again, till another month had passed ; then father and I determined to go in search of her.

'When we arrived at the place, on the outskirts of London, we were shown into a drawing room, bright and gaudy, looking as though it was only intended for a show room. We were kept waiting a long time, then a lady in keeping with the room entered, and finding we had only come to enquire about her governess, treated us with great disdain. She said, insolently, as she leaned back in an easy chair, "I'm not my governess' keeper, you know." When we pressed her, she said she believed the young person in question had married some tutor and gone away, she didn't know where, and she was sure she didn't care. But she wouldn't be bothered again about her! So we had to leave.

'We searched the church records to find what her new name might be, we advertised, and did everything we could think of, but never found any trace of her ; when

## ENA

I saw your face in church, I felt as if my old friend was present once more.

'Then she told me of her own lonely life, and wanted me to go and live with her, but I couldn't give up my independence, you know, Ena. Now I understand why it was my father was so anxious I should train for a school-mistress, instead of going as a private governess.'

A silence of sympathy fell between the two for a while ; then they began examining the state of the corn-fields, and speculating as to when the harvest would be ripe, for upon that depended the commencement and duration of their summer vacation.

'Did you notice, Ena, how ill Katie Craven looked when she asked to go home this morning ; and one of the boys vomited before he could get to the door ?'

'Yes, it put me in mind of that time in Skifton when ague and fever were so bad, several children would go out in the same way every day ; and it continued so for all one very damp and foggy winter we had.'

'Well, I hope we shall have no epidemic here, for, let alone the suffering of the children, I am afraid in the coming examination, we should fall far below the usual average.'

'Oh ! I think not,' said a cheery voice from the roadside, and Mr Winton, the curate in charge, who had heard the last few words of the conversation, got down from a stile where he had been sitting, and came towards them.

They all walked back together to the school-house, discussing day and Sunday school, choir and harvest

## ENA

prospects, with a vim and pleasure the topics themselves could hardly have warranted.

'Are you very tired, Mr Winton?' said Ena at last, 'I never knew you to walk so slowly.'

The quick flush which rose so easily to Miss Sonning's face, and showed in a fluctuating manner through her pure white skin, now flew over face and neck as her eyes met those of Mr Winton.

He laughingly declared that the evening was too fine to spend indoors, where he had no company but books, and that he was making the most of the weather and them.

They became silent for a while after this, till Ena again spoke of the illness of the children in the morning. They were near the school now, and Mr Winton took the names of the two, promising to go to-morrow, if nothing prevented, and see how they were. He was inclined, however, to think it only a bilious attack.

So they parted at the gate, and Ena, who had gone on before, did not see how the hands of the two lingered together as they said 'Good-night.'

## CHAPTER XX

NEXT morning several more children showed the same symptoms and had to go home. In less than two weeks the school was almost empty. The parish doctor came in with Mr Winton, and told Miss Sonning it was an epidemic of scarlet fever, but of a very light form. There was no danger at present, except any of them took cold, when a relapse would, in all probability, prove fatal. He said the school must be closed, and the teachers, if they had not already had it, should go away after taking due precautions not to carry it with them.

Mr Winton urged Miss Sonning to go, but she said, 'No, she would remain and help to look after the children.' As all persuasion was in vain, Ena, who had had it in early childhood, resolved to stay with her.

It now wanted but four weeks to the harvest, and almost every cottage had one or more children, sometimes a whole household, down with the fever.

Miss Sonning and Ena made jellies and nourishments and carried them to the sick. In this they were more than seconded by Miss Stevens, whose experience was as much greater than theirs, as her means were.

But they all worked heartily, sitting up at night when required, relieving a tired and worn-out mother, either by doing her work while she watched, or watching while she took some sorely needed rest.

'Little Johnny Patson be dreadful bad, Teacher,'

## ENA

said one of the elder girls, to Ena, 'he jumped out his bed, an' went to making dirt pies, an' now the doctor do say, he be goin' to die; an' Johnnie wants you.'

Ena took up a small jelly, such as she had fed Johnny with when his fever was at its height, and started out at once for the cottage.

They had paid no attention to Johnny for several days, as he had been pronounced out of danger. Now Ena found him looking ghastly and swollen, but he knew her as she entered, and smiled up at her. He took some of the jelly eagerly, but it passed right through him at once with a gurgle. His mother was standing by with her apron to her eyes, and a baby in her arms.

'How did it happen, Mrs Patson?' enquired Ena sadly. 'You see, Miss, Johnny be'd all the time outdoors, no use tryin' to keep en in, an' you knows how well 'ee be'ed?' Ena assented.

'Well Miss, I'd be cookin' some supper fer 'ees fayther, ee didn't 'ave a decent bite o' nothin' sence the children took ill; an' would ee believe it, when ee comes in, our Johnny be in he's arms. Us put en in bed, an' ee drunk some tea, an' did eat ees supper dupper-like, but afore mornin' ee be'ed all swelled up like you see 'en now, an' I be feared 'ee'll die.'

Ena stayed and watched with the parents till all was over. It was twelve o'clock when she reached the school-house. She went noiselessly into Miss Sonning's room to see if she was asleep, and found her with brilliant eyes and flushed cheeks, complaining of thirst and sore throat.



## ENA

Ena made a fire and got her some tea, which she drank eagerly. She sat with her till morning ; and, as by that time Miss Sonning was becoming delirious, she sent the monitress for her grandmother, who was always willing to do anything for them, in return for the assistance given her bright grand-daughter. They watched for the doctor as he passed on his morning rounds ; he had to drive in from Reading, or Ena would have sent for him in the night ; and there was no doctor nearer. It had not occurred to her tired brain to send word to Miss Stevens, who would instantly have dispatched her groom.

As neither had been to early service that morning Mr Winton, fearful of what might be, came over to the school-house directly after to enquire for them. He came up while Ena was talking to the doctor, and said, 'Come, Ena child, we shall have you on our hands yet, you look like a little ghost.'

The kind words and tone were too much for the overwrought girl, she broke down and sobbed convulsively. As the doctor went upstairs he led her into the house. When he came down, she dried her eyes and asked him what he thought of Miss Sonning ?

'The worst case yet !' he said seriously ; but as his observant eye noted the sudden palor of Mr Winton's face, he added, 'but lots of staying power, we shall pull through alright.' Then looking kindly at Ena he said 'What have you been doing to yourself? You must keep up.' He examined her tongue and her pulse. 'There's no fever here ; quite the contrary, very low.' The monitress looked in to say 'Granny has come !'

## ENA

The doctor turned to her and asked, 'What has Miss Ena been doing?'

'Please Sir! she sat up with little Johnny Patson last night till he died; and then with Miss Sonning, making tea for her, and tending her till now.'

'Quick, Winton! some wine,' said the doctor as Ena reeled over, fainting. 'She has worked bravely, poor child, and is exhausted. I shall order her to bed, and leave Miss Sonning in charge of Granny Prine.'

When Ena came round, he told her to take a good breakfast, and go to bed; 'and stay there,' he added as he went out, 'till I come in the morning.' She was too weak to do anything else.

Mr Winton went to Miss Stevens, and she and her maid, were soon established at the school-house.

Ena was kept in bed for a week, and then allowed to get up late and go to bed again early, for another week; after that she was as well as ever.

But the fever kept steadily increasing on poor Miss Sonning, and only the greatest of care, and best of nursing, under God, pulled her through.

When, after five weeks she was allowed to sit up for a while, the mere shadow of her former self, it was very evident she would be unable to take charge of the school when it re-opened in about three weeks. So a substitute was engaged, and as soon as it was safe to move her, Miss Stevens took her first to the Parsonage, and then to a quiet seaside village. Here, Mr Winton was a frequent visitor, and Miss Stevens found her triumph of short duration, for these two determined to cast in their lot together.

## CHAPTER XXI

WE must now glance back at Grandma Howel, and the rest of the family at home.

Sam had gone into a lawyer's office in Granston, he could stand the petty tyrannies of his elder brother no longer. Even the usually cheerful Grandma wrote somewhat despondently to Ena, whom they had not seen for over a year.

The home friends all resented the inopportune fever, which had deprived them of her for the few weeks in the summer they had counted upon. 'Even Harry,' wrote Annie, 'forgot half his nonsense, because you were away. He has gained his degree, and been ordained a Deacon. It seemed so queer to have him standing in the Reading Desk, saying prayers; but I thought he looked lovely in his surplice, and he read delightfully. It is the first harvest holiday he has been at home since he went to St Augustine's, and he was sure we should all spend it together.'

So Harry had not forgotten her, she felt strangely happy over the thought.

On Monday school began again, and the temporary mistress was to arrive to-night. Ena wondered what she would be like, she felt sure she couldn't love her as she did Miss Sonning, but comforted herself with the thought that it was only for three months.

A cab drove up to the gate, and Ena went out to

## ENA

meet Miss Watkins. She was weary and dispirited looking, of medium height, with a drab kind of complexion and hair and eyes to match. She had not been a successful teacher, and had changed from school to school without finding the satisfaction she was looking for. As Ena led her into the house where tea awaited her, she complained of the cost of the cab, feeling sure the driver had cheated her, of the length of the journey, the dust and heat, the dullness of the country, and lastly of the churchyard, or burial ground, which lay, with its graves and head-stones between the school and church. Ena soon found that was her way, for nothing seemed to please her, and the poor girl felt rather down-hearted.

'I hope your tea is to your liking?' she ventured to ask as a third cup was being poured out.

'It might be a little hotter, and I think it would be less likely to give me indigestion if it hadn't stood so long.'

After that the meal proceeded in silence, except for a few uncomplimentary remarks upon different subjects by Miss Watkins.

Ena felt it quite a relief when it was time to go over to the church for choir practice.

'Has Miss Watkins arrived?' asked Mr Winton, 'and what do you think of her?' he added somewhat quizzically as he watched her face.

Ena told him; he laughed and said, 'Well, you know we can't expect another Miss Sonning. We must do the best we can.'

'I know we must. But it is the church music I feel troubled about. I am sure Grandma is both ill and

## ENA

worried, I mustn't disappoint her at Christmas; Miss Watkins can't play, and it seems wrong to spoil the Christmas services.'

'Never mind, Ena, I'll get someone to take it for two or three weeks then if I can. Suppose no one is willing, they must do without music.'

She felt relieved by his decided manner, and wrote a cheerful letter home upon her return to the house.

Things went on in dull routine, with very little interest shown on the part of the temporary mistress either for school or anything else.

Ena looked forward with a sick-at-heart longing for the Christmas vacation; she thought Miss Sonning would be back after that, and said so one day to Mr Winton, who coloured slightly and said he thought not. In answer to her look of surprise he continued, 'But we must make the best of things, Ena.'

'But Miss Sonning says in her letter, she is so well, and feels stronger than ever.'

'I know; but she is to stay with Miss Stevens till Easter.'

Christmas of course duly arrived, and Ena was met this time by Miss Sonning; who told her of the engagement between Mr Winton and herself, as they rattled across London. Of the marriage which was to take place at Easter, when Mr Robin would be back at Grassmore, and that Mr Winton would take up new duties in London, in the same Parish in which Miss Stevens was living.

'Ena, you must come up for the wedding and be my dear little bridesmaid,' she said as she kissed Ena

## ENA

'Goodbye.' She was to spend at least a day with Miss Sonning upon her return and she looked forward to that with great pleasure.

Sam met her at Granston Station, and told her as she glanced round for Joggy, that Mamma had sold him and the wagonette, and that John had had the money for something, so she would have to go home with the carrier, unless Alf Flint was still in town. Alf himself just then turned into the station yard, and said Mattie had told him Ena was coming to-day, and to look out for her. So she was soon rattling away home with him.

Sam told her he would be home in the evening, and after depositing her luggage in the carrier's cart, started for his usual Saturday's walk home.

Ena plied Alf with questions, but he only laughed and shook his head, telling her she looked so dreadfully 'grown up,' he didn't know what to say to her.

Grandma was on the look out for her, and caught her in her arms as she leaped down from Alf's gig.

'Why my dear child, how you have grown! You look more like nineteen than fifteen. How we have wanted you! See how the girls have grown; and here's Mamma with one of her nervous headaches'; she said as they entered the parlour; where Mrs Hetherington lay upon the sofa, looking worn and ill.

Ena turned from one to the other, she could hardly believe this was her own dear ruddy Grandma. Even the younger girls, though much grown, hardly looked like their generally well-dressed selves.

Presently there came a rattle and bang at the front

## ENA

door, a reeling step, and John burst into the room. His hat on the back of his head, and he was singing a song he ought to have been ashamed of.

'Hello! Ena!' he hiccoughed, 'Got home again, ey! Well, you'd better make the most of it while it lasts. I mean to have a short life and a merry one. Here Mother, jump up, and let's have tea. Strong! mind. I've got an engagement at eight, at eight.'

A downy moustache was appearing on his upper lip, and he had grown into a fine-looking young man, since Ena had been from home.

'Old lady there,' he continued indicating his Grandma, 'got the best of me, and shipped that piano off to you. It was on my premises, I tell you,' he was getting quarrelsome, 'and she had no business to do it; she never pays me any rent, and has the two best rooms in the house, she has. She has!' he asserted again, as if trying to get some one to contradict him.

'We'll talk about that another time, John. You know Ena is but just in from Reading.'

'Yes, there it is again,' he went on in a maudlin fashion, 'just what Bob Smith says, I've got such a lot of hangers on. I can't have a good time myself, till I've kicked 'em all out; kicked 'em all out! That's what Bob Smith says. I ain't going in to tea; give us a glass o' beer here, Mother. You're the only decent one among 'em; you always did like a fellow to have a good time. All the rest are dead against me, Bob Smith says so, and he ought to know.' Then he subsided into a drunken sleep on the sofa, from which his mother had just risen.

## ENA

They went quietly enough in to tea, no pleasant chatter and laughing, like the last time Ena came home; and she noticed a mark on Hattie's cheek, as though she had been struck by a heavy hand.

Sam came in before tea was over, and they all talked quietly for fear of waking John.

The Grandma got quite cheerful, when they were all seated in her cosy room, and talked and laughed, as Sam told Ena afterwards, he never expected to see her do again.

Betsy gave a sorry account of 'Master John's' goings on, especially for the last six months. How he twitted Grandma for not paying rent for rooms in his house, stayed out late and seldom came home sober, and seemed specially set against Hattie. If she was not quick enough in obeying his orders he would strike her, and call her a puling white-faced thing. His mother seemed entirely in his hands, and would allow no one to interfere with him.

Hattie was now twelve and tall for her age. She had been regularly to school, as had Jessie, who was nearly seven, but so small she looked younger.

Grandma turned once to Ena suddenly, as they sat repairing, and making clothes, and said, 'I'm very anxious about the girls' education. I've saved forty pounds to help out with, that your mother does not know of, or she would want it for John. I shall give ten pounds of it in your charge when you return, in case anything happens to me.'

Ena looked up at her in alarm; but she only smiled, and said she felt alright at present. 'I have been



## ENA

thinking perhaps Hattie might go back with you, and prepare for her examination next Christmas; she could share your room, and as you board yourself, you know the cost would not be greatly increased.

Ena wrote immediately to Mr Winton, asking if he thought there would be any objection to this arrangement. He answered by return post, saying he did not see there could be. And Grandma seemed greatly relieved.

They got everything ready for Hattie without telling her a word about it, and great was her joy when the time came, for she was glad to escape from John, of whom she was dreadfully afraid.

'Grandma,' said Ena, a day or two before her return to Grassmore, 'why don't you go to Granston and live in peace, in your own house again; you can do no good with John, and he is always saying something about your paying no rent?'

'My dear, that has already been sold, or your mother would have lost this place. What John has done with all the money he has had in the last six months I don't know. I am afraid he gambles.'

Ena was silent, she saw things were even worse than she had expected. Her home friends found her very dull, but they could all see she was unhappy and knew the cause only too well.

It was a very sorrowful goodbye she bade her Grandma, when she left home, this time with Hattie in charge. She spent her day in London with Miss Sonning, and she and Miss Stevens were greatly pleased with Hattie.

## CHAPTER XXII

ONCE again she returned to Grassmore, but she had an added interest in having Hattie with her. Miss Watkins also liked the quiet child; and, as the two sisters did all they could for her, she very kindly gave Hattie extra assistance, and pushed her along with her studies.

Ena took no more music lessons, she was afraid of the expense, but she kept up her practice, and taught Hattie as well, who was very quick and clever with it, and gave little trouble.

Now Miss Watkins was permanently engaged as Mistress, she brightened up, and took more interest in school. So things went on till near Easter, when Mr and Mrs Kobin returned. The latter was perfectly suited with Miss Watkins' dreary manner and sombre garments, which always gave one the idea that she had dropped them to the floor when undressing, and they had remained in a heap till required again. Ena had still to assist with the choir, and play the harmonium, as Mrs Kobin was far from strong.

Then came the question of expense; could she afford to go up to Miss Sonning's wedding? She felt she must. Miss Stevens wrote to her, not to get a dress as she had already provided one each for her and

## ENA

Hattie; they only needed fitting, so they must come up directly school closed on Thursday afternoon; and as Mr Winton was coming then, he would bring them.

The wedding took place quietly on Easter Monday morning, with only the two girls as bridesmaids, a college friend of Mr Winton, and Miss Stevens who gave away the bride.

When they returned from church, with the officiating clergyman, to luncheon; a young man came eagerly forward, holding out both hands to Ena. She looked up quickly and recognised Harry Linwood in clerical dress. It was the first time they had met for nearly four years, and the change in both was very apparent.

'We are old friends,' explained Harry, who was a Deacon in the Parish. Such a quiet earnestness was in the young man's manner, Ena felt shy with him, but very happy in his evident pleasure at meeting her again.

Luncheon over, Mr and Mrs Winton departed for Calais, en route for the South of Europe, Egypt, and the Holy Land. They were to make a three months' tour, before settling down to their life's work together.

The two girls spent the week with Miss Stevens, who took them to St Paul's, Westminster Abbey, the British Museum, where the ancient remains and relics from Egypt engrossed Ena's attention; the Tower, and Kensington. It was a revelation to these two country girls.

Harry, who was a special favourite of Miss Stevens', was in to afternoon tea every day, and then they all went to service together. Ena felt strengthened to

## ENA

meet the trials that foreboded, little thinking how great they were to be.

Miss Stevens proposed that Hattie should stay with her for a while; poor child, she looked very drooping and complained of being tired all the time.

So Ena returned alone to Grassmore, determined to work harder than ever.

## CHAPTER XXIII

Now that Mr and Mrs Kobin were again settled at home, Miss Stevens proposed to them to give a regular village fête, such as she had intended giving, but for the unfortunate epidemic of Scarlet Fever. Two other parishes wished to join with them, and it promised to be of more than ordinary interest.

The use of a fifty-acre meadow, situated about equidistant from the three places, was procured from a farmer, in which stood some great spreading walnut trees. Under these, tables of boards set up on trestles, were placed, and covered with calico which would afterwards serve to be made up into garments for the parish bag.

Arches of evergreens were constructed over the gates, and made bright with flying bunting.

A prettily shaped fir-tree standing alone, was decorated with bright ribbons and small flags, and hung with every imaginable cheap toy and picture.

A platform was raised, and a brass band from Reading was to occupy it.

A Maypole was erected, although it was the middle of June, with a large green ham (*i.e.* salted but not smoked), tied to the top; which the one who succeeded in reaching and untying was to have for his pains.

## ENA

Anyone can imagine the anxiety with which all concerned opened their eyes upon this momentous morning, and rejoiced at the brightly shining sun, and cloudless sky.

The children were conveyed to the scene of festivities in farm wagons; not only the children, but the old people, and mothers with babies and toddlers, too young for Sunday-school. Such a happy procession! Flying the flags made by the Sunday-school teachers, and singing their school songs lustily.

The three bands of people and children were to meet at one spot, a short distance from the field, whence they marched two and two, girls first, boys after, and each school headed by its own banner, beside the small motto and other flags carried by the children. The teachers walked by the side, to keep them in line. The elder sisters, mothers, and sturdier of the parishioners kept beside the marching lines of children, whilst the rear was brought up by the aged and decrepit, some of whom had not met for many years, although but a few miles of country had lain between them.

Under the triumphal arches, to the head of the long tables went the leaders, here they parted, one line filing down each side, and standing in their places. The men and boys uncovered, and led by one of the clergy, they sung grace. Then, when all were seated on the rough board seats, the teachers brought large wash-baskets full of bread and butter, and bread and jam first, followed by cans and jugs of sweet tea and coffee, for which each child came provided with a mug or tot. All these were followed by an unlimited supply of

## ENA

'plum-cake,' then more tea and coffee to repletion. When no one could eat any more, they all rose, stood over the benches, and again sung grace ; but this time with effort, and much out of tune. They were allowed to scamper wherever they chose, several of the teachers going with them to start games, and see that no one played too roughly.

Some of them cleared off the tables, and prepared fresh tea and coffee for the elders, whose repast was the same as the children's with the addition of some very substantial beef sandwiches. They needed no plates, but each, as the children had done, brought their own tot or cup. They ate as heartily as the younger ones, and many a woman put away in a clean pocket-handkerchief, a beef sandwich and a large piece of cake for her good man's supper.

All this time the band played lively airs and marches, and everyone was in the best of spirits.

Now came another exciting part of the entertainment. Two tables at a great distance from each other were set up. One had hats, caps, pieces of cotton for shirts, ties, stockings, pocket knives and marbles.

The other had pieces of print and lindsay for dresses, calico and flannel, aprons made and unmade, pocket handkerchiefs, ribbons, stockings, hats for girls, beside needles, cotton, thimbles and other things.

For these things the girls ran races ; and the boys not only ran races, but went in sacks, on three legs, all fours, and as wheelbarrows ; some carried a small boy on their backs, and there was great measuring and 'weighting' of the little fellows to get one as light as

## ENA

possible, and yet jig enough to 'hold on.' The youngsters were eager to be taken, for those who came in on the winners got a prize too. They had first, second and third prize each time, and no one was allowed to run a second time, till all who wished to compete had had an opportunity of doing so.

After all the prizes had been distributed from the tables, a bag was brought out containing tickets enough for everyone to draw, and the fun was great when big John Higgins drew a doll, and little Polly Prine a jack-knife; she carried it along in a very gingerly manner to Granny Prine, and seemed relieved that it had not cut her on the way. One old man got a tin rattle, but old Mrs Jenkins drew the grand prize, a whole pound of tea; she had never had so much at once since she went to house-keeping some fifty years before.

Now came the climbing for the ham, many tried but all failed, until a quiet little fellow, who had lately lost his parents, and came to live with his grandmother, went up. He clung to the pole with legs and arms when he reached the top, and succeeded in untying the knot with his teeth, when down came the ham with a thud; and the poor old dame was afraid to look, she thought it was her boy. But he slid quickly down after it, picked it up, and with difficulty carried it to her, amidst the shouts of the onlookers. Poor old woman, she shed tears of joy for his safety, and the plenty the big ham would bring them.

The teachers and visitors now footed 'Sir Roger de



## ENA

Coverly' on the grass, then the remaining provisions were distributed and after singing 'God save the Queen,' they went home in the order they had come, giving many and hearty cheers for their entertainment, not forgetting Miss Stevens.

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## CHAPTER XXIV

JULY; and soon the long holidays. Ena wrote her grandma a very loving and cheerful letter, and the old lady smiled over her glasses as she read it, and wished the time had already arrived.

Hattie still remained with Miss Stevens, who wrote very despondently about her. She said the child suffered no pain, but grew weaker and weaker as the months went by in spite of every care, and all the nourishment which could be given her. Ena was to take her home at the vacation.

One morning the old postman handed Ena a letter deeply edged in black. Glancing quickly at it she saw it was in her mother's handwriting. She was afraid to open it; could it be her brother John? It contained only a few words. 'Your grandma died suddenly this morning. Come at once.'

There was no telegraph then nearer than Granston, and it took two days for a letter to reach Grassmore from Shifton.

Mr Kobin came into school after early service, and Ena handed him the letter without a word, unable to trust herself to speak.

He sent one of the elder girls to tell his coachman to get the horse in, and bring it to the school as quickly as

## ENA

possible ; told Ena to get together what she needed ; looked up a Bradshaw and found if they could make the train at Reading, she would be able to reach home that night. He also gave a telegram to the coachman to send on to Miss Stevens, asking her to take Hattie to Shoreditch to meet her sister.

In ten minutes she was on the road, too stunned to cry, or even to think. When she saw Hattie's gentle face and languid form at Shoreditch she shed her first tears, for she could see only too plainly, that it would not be long before another of them must go. She laid the child down on a seat in the railway carriage among some cushions and rugs Miss Stevens had brought, and they started on their sad journey home.

As she glanced at Hattie lying asleep, with the dark rings under her eyes, and her poor thin face, she knew it could be but a matter of a few months for her at most and then she would be with dear Grandma. She fell to thinking of Jessie, and wondering how she had fared.

It was a sad home-coming. She soon found that things had gone from bad to worse. John had been drinking more, and staying out later than ever. Then he took to hunting wild fowl in the Marshes with Bob Smith ; till, one day, either from drunken stupidity or sheer accident, he shot Bob in the arm. He was a bad subject to begin with for anything of the kind, and then the time it took to get to Wisbech to Dr Mason, whose bone-setting renown had spread far and wide, and few people were satisfied with anyone else, if there was any possibility of obtaining the services of Dr Mason. Any-way the arm had to be amputated.

## ENA

Smith threatened Mrs Hetherington to prosecute John for attempted murder, unless one thousand pounds were paid him down as hush money.

We have seen before what a horror these people had of a court of law; they had never been inside one. Then the picture the man drew of John hanging, if Smith should yet die of his wound; anyway of his being transported to penal servitude for life, filled them with dread.

Mrs Hetherington tried to sell the estate, but being entailed, that was out of the question. Then she begged her mother, on her knees to sell out from 'The Funds' one thousand pounds of hers. It was the amount which was to come to her at her mother's death, she knew by her father's will.

Mrs Howel assured her daughter she had no control of it in her lifetime. Then they had recourse to their lawyer, who told them the man would undoubtedly recover damages, or in default imprison John; but as to hanging! that was out of the question, as Smith himself had spoken of it as an accident in the first place.

Mrs Howel, whose health had been failing for some time, took a cold from which slight Erysipelas in the head resulted. She had thought little of it, and refused to have a doctor called in; she had only needed one twice in her lifetime, once when she was a child and had Scarlet Fever; and again when her daughter was born.

The fear of what might happen to himself had sobered John, and the three sat late in Grandma's room, talking

## ENA

it all over, and resolving to take the lawyer's advice, and let a court of law decide the damages.

She bade them an affectionate good-night, and when Mrs Hetherington returned a little later to be sure her mother needed nothing more for the night, she found the dear old lady going over Ena's letter again. She looked up over her spectacles in the way she had, and smiling said, 'Alright, my dear! alright,' and those were the last words she said, for in the morning they found her, with the same pleasant look upon her face, dead in her bed, and Ena's letter lying beside her.

The doctor said the erysipelas of which she had thought so little had touched the brain, and caused her sudden death, which however had been instant and painless.

Ena wrote Mr Kobin, that she was sorry not to be able to return at once, indeed not until after the Harvest Holidays, as her mother was in much trouble and her sister not expected to live.

He wrote back very kindly, telling her how he had appreciated her quiet work, giving her the result of a very successfully passed examination, both for herself and her department. As haying time was on, and the school but thinly attended, they would try and do without her till after Harvest. The church music troubled them most as Mrs Kobin found the harmonium most fatiguing. He wound up by saying, 'I have found out the self-sacrifice you made for Mrs Carson's sake, and Mrs Kobin and I fully appreciate your self sacrifice, although we think it was a mistaken kindness.'

## ENA

It seemed Carson had been promoted to a better position, and before going his wife had made confession of the truth.

Dear Grandma was buried beside her son-in-law, as she could not lie beside her husband, for the city burying-grounds had been closed. Seven weeks after, Hattie was laid beside her. Poor Ena's heart was very sore; her only relief lay in the constant action which was required of her.

## CHAPTER XXV

EVENTS crowded upon Ena in quick succession, she had scarcely time to realise one before another was in its wake.

Mrs Hetherington had always trusted to some one else to act for her ; and now, husband and mother gone, she turned to Ena.

The assizes were at hand, and they had to go to Norwich, for Smith would make no compromise, it 'must be the cool thousand,' he said, 'or jail for Master John.' What an ordeal it all was to them, only those who have been in a like plight can tell.

The verdict was given; five hundred pounds and costs; which amounted to two hundred and fifty more, or two years in Norwich Castle.

'Don't you let mother pay it, John! It will ruin her. I will get a school near you, and when you come out, you can make a fresh start abroad. Mamma will only have two hundred and fifty pounds left; for you know all the money that could be raised on the house and orchard, has already been obtained.'

'My son go to jail! A convict! No!' burst out Mrs Hetherington in an hysterical passion. 'You have no feeling for any of us, Ena! You only want money for the schooling you are always makingsuch a fuss

## ENA

about; and I can't see that any good has come of it yet; although it's cost enough, goodness knows!

'Grandma paid for it,' said Ena sadly, 'and I hope you have not had to suffer.'

'Suffering or not; that expense must be stopped, you will have to earn enough to keep yourself after this. I shall have nothing for myself. If I hadn't such a crew of you, I might marry again and live comfortably.'

'I can manage to take Jessie back with me, Mamma. Sam is keeping himself, and you will have only John.'

'Give me the two hundred and fifty pounds, Mother,' said he, 'and I'll make a fresh start in Australia.' He was getting over his fright, since he was not to go to jail, and Ena feared he would soon be back in his old ways. The idea of his making a fresh start in one of the Colonies, had never occurred to her; indeed she would not have dared to suggest it, if it had.

'Well,' he went on, as no one spoke, 'what do you say, is it a bargain?'

'What does it cost for a ticket to go out there?' his mother asked hesitatingly.

'A ticket!' he laughed hoarsely, 'I shall want two if I go. I was married to Nancy Hanks, just before Hattie died; and I'll bet two to one, if I go, she goes too.'

'Married! and to that bold, red-faced barmaid from the "White Hart!" Why, she's ever so much older than you! You hardened boy! I've done with you. Take the two hundred pounds, and never let me see you or her any more. At least I'll give it to you when



## ENA

you are ready to sail,' she said, reconsidering it, and for once acting with discretion.

They all now returned to Skifton, and Mrs Hetherington interviewed her daughter-in-law, declaring, 'She wasn't so bad after all!'

The day they left for Liverpool, she gave them the two hundred pounds, and Mrs John took possession of it and him, and managed both with great success. She bought land just outside Melbourne, with an hostelry attached, and got along very well. It is true her husband was more ornamental than useful, but she seemed to have industry and common sense enough for both; and though she adored him as much as his mother had done, her strength of will held him in check, and the lively interest he took in his growing family, made of him a better man than his friends had hoped to see him.

## CHAPTER XXIV

It was now little more than a week before the Grassmore school re-opened, and Ena wanted sadly to spend a few days with Mrs Winton, who was expected home daily, as she passed through London.

'Shall I take Jessie with me, when I return on Saturday, Mamma?'

'Now I told you, Ena, after the expense I have had with John, I can't spare you any more money. I have been considering for the last few days, an offer of marriage; the man is not quite as well off as I could wish, but he thinks he could do well by the place, and make a good living for me. You know, Ena, I never have been very strong, and never quite recovered the shock of your poor father's death. Just think what a trial it was to a delicate woman like me, to have to bring you all up alone.'

Ena thought of the good Grandma, and wondered what they would have done without her.

'You can take Jessie, of course,' Mrs Hetherington continued, 'I shall be able to help you to buy her clothes, and send you a little money sometimes, I suppose. Then there's Sam can't get along alone yet, his pay is so small. You had better put Hattie's things together, they'll do for Jessie.'

'Mamma!' said Ena timidly, 'do you know what

## ENA

became of the thirty pounds, Grandma had put away for Jessie and me ?'

'What next I should like to know ! am I to account to you for what my mother left me ?'

'Certainly not, Mamma ; only Grandma told me she had laid it away for us, in case anything happened to her, before we could make our own way.'

'Well, I found John ransacking her drawers, before poor mother was taken down to the best parlour, and I was only just in time to get it first, even then he wanted some of it. He was a little down over the shooting and court affair, so he let me keep it ; but it nearly all went for the Norwich expenses, and the mourning. Now I have only the fifty pounds left of poor mother's money, and I must keep that for Mr Sharp. I must have something when I am married.'

So her mother was going to marry that miserly old man. Ena was glad Jessie was to return with her. Mr Kobin's permission had already been asked. She thought she ought to warn her mother of the kind of man she was about to marry.

'Mamma, dear !' she ventured, hesitatingly, 'Do you think you will be happy with a man like that ; I am afraid he won't be kind to you.'

'So I am to take advice from my own daughter as to whom I am to marry ! Perhaps you'll kindly say when I'm to marry, or forbid the banns, or something of the sort. Well, let me tell you we shall be married by license.'

Ena saw it was all settled, so she asked when it was it was to be.

## ENA

'At Michaelmas.'

'I shall not be able to be here, Mamma, I'm sorry for that.'

'Well, I'm not; as you seem to have so many opinions of your own, and I daresay Mr Sharpe will be as well pleased.'

So Ena packed her things, and once more travelled Londonwards; this time with Jessie in charge.

Miss Stevens met the pale, worried looking girl at Shoreditch; and taking her two hands in hers, bent over and kissed her so kindly, that the long pent up tears flowed freely, and the drive was accomplished in silence, for Miss Stevens knew the subsequent relief these tears would bring.

Harry was standing on the pavement, awaiting their arrival. He handed them down, pressing Ena's hand in sympathy with all her troubles.

'Ha! Gypsy,' he said, as he playfully took Jessie down with a flourish, using the child's home nick-name, 'you here, Puss! what do you think we can do with you?'

She rewarded him with a dark look, and Miss Stevens thought Ena had something of a task before her, as she looked at the child.

They went in to luncheon; and then, Miss Stevens, seeing Ena's strength lay in action, she invited her to go on her parish rounds, and see some of her poor people, and invalids.

One case, of a gentle and refined young seamstress, whose long hours of toil and small remuneration had at last broken down her health, took Ena's attention

## ENA

completely, and she begged to be left there, till Miss Stevens returned.

'I wish I had my school and house now, and then I could have you down with me for two or three weeks, the country air is so refreshing.'

The young girl's eyes brightened at mention of the country, and her thoughts went back to her own early life.

'I was the daughter of a country schoolmaster,' she said, 'father had a small school near Berkhamstead, where so much straw-plaiting is done, you know. We lived in a little thatched cottage near, as the school had no house attached. Mother trained up creepers all over the porch and up the thatch, father worked in the garden out of school hours, and we were very happy there.'

She paused as she thought of it all, and sighed. 'But father held no certificate, he had not been teaching quite long enough to obtain one by length of service, as many did when it became compulsory, and he was unable to earn one by examination. He got so nervous, he said, he could remember nothing at all. The last time he tried, he fell in a fit on the floor of the room where the examination was held. He was brought home to us, paralysis followed, and after six months he died.

'Mother and I did embroidery and plain sewing, or anything we could for a living. In a country village there is very little of that kind of thing to do. We could neither of us do the straw plaiting; to be really expert at it one needs to begin in early childhood, as

## ENA

they all do down there. So, when we couldn't pay the rent any longer, we came to London. We had been told that needlework was very plentiful here. We took this room and looked about for work, but we could only get shop work, and that is very poorly paid. Poor mother soon began to sicken, and was unable to go out at all. Not long after she had to give up sewing, she was too weak.

'The only comfort I had was to go to church once on a Sunday, I could spare no more time, as I had to keep stitching, stitching, stitching, week day and Sunday, and almost night and day, or the rent could not be paid, and there was little over that to keep us alive.

'Mother got very ill, and wished to take Holy Communion before she died. I went for the clergyman of the church I had attended; and when I think of the comfort he and his dear wife brought to my poor mother's last few weeks on earth, I feel too thankful for words; for she lived two months with the kind help they gave, and I'm sure she would only have lasted a few days without.

'She died two weeks ago, and they are going to send me for six weeks to the country, in charge of some poor children, out of a fund for that purpose; and then I'm to have a situation in the children's refuge to teach and help to care for the little ones; and to have opportunities to improve myself; and,' she added after a pause, with tears in her earnest eyes, 'God helping me, I'll work with such a will, as to pay them back if possible.'

## ENA

And she did, for we heard of her in after years as Matron of that same Refuge Home, doing such work for her fellows, as only a few tactful, earnest souls are enabled to do.

Harry and Ena went long healthful walks together; and Miss Stevens looked on at the evidently mutual regard of the two young people, with a sympathy only equalled by her goodness.

'Ena, how old are you?' she asked one day, after one of these walks, as they sat at afternoon tea.

'I shall be seventeen next Christmas, if I live.'

'I should have taken you to be nineteen or twenty, you are so tall and serious looking.'

'When do you complete your Ordination?' she enquired turning to Harry.

'In nine months.'

'And then?'

'I'm not sure, but something was said of my going to Zanzibar for two years.'

'You'll be through college by that time, Ena, and have the school and house, you count upon so much.'

Ena smiled sadly, 'I shall have to do with a Provisional Certificate, and go Assistant Mistress instead, for I have Jessie to provide for now, and no Grandma to help us.' Her voice trembled but she forced herself to continue, 'You see Mamma is going to marry again at Michaelmas, and I should not like Jessie to go home.'

She did not add that her mother's husband elect had said 'he would not have them there; they were old enough to work for themselves, and would have to do

## ENA

so, one way or another. 'You're a likely gal yourself,' he had said to Ena, 'and might git married, and take the little 'un with yer.' She flushed with annoyance as she thought of it. Such a man in her father's place! For a will of the late Mr Hetherington's had been found since her Grandma's death, in which he left everything to his wife. It was this will no doubt, of which he tried so hard to speak to the Grandma, as he lay dying.

Ena's heart stirred strangely, and the colour mantled her pale face, as she looked up and met the loving, earnest gaze of the young man. Neither had noticed the departure of Miss Stevens, till now. Harry came swiftly to her side, and taking her hands in his, tried to make her look up at him.

'Ena, darling!' he said breathlessly, 'Could you ever care for me? Could you learn to love me?'

She glanced shyly up.

'Tell me, darling! Tell me!' he urged.

'I think,' she said hesitatingly, 'I must always have loved you without knowing it. Oh Harry!' and her tears flowed fast, this crying so easily was a new thing to the brave girl, she did not know it was owing to the overstrain to which she had been subjected. 'Oh, Harry! you are too good for me; I shall never be able to help you as I ought to.'

Half-an-hour after, the door opened, and three persons entered. Harry and Ena were standing on the hearth rug, his arm protectingly round her, her head resting on his broad chest.

'My dear children!' broke from the three simul-



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taneously. They had all expected it, and were delighted to see they had not been mistaken.

Mr and Mrs Winton had returned, and were looking well after their journeyings. The evening these five people spent together was one of unalloyed happiness, such as only the 'pure in heart' can know in this world. But physical pain entered even here, for once, as the evening wore on, they noticed a grey look upon the face of Miss Stevens, and heard her give a quick gasp. Poor thing, she knew for a certainty, what she had suspected for years; that the malady of her mother, internal cancer, had descended to her, and she only prayed that when she could hide it no longer, the end might be speedy, not for her own sake, but for those who loved her. She remembered the lingering agonies of her mother, and felt that her cross was heavy. But she sought for strength to bear it, and worked in the cause of humanity with an almost feverish avidity, greedy to do all good works while she yet had time.

## CHAPTER XXV

ENA now went back to Grassmore, with Jessie. On their arrival Mrs Kobin sent for Ena, ostensibly to talk about the church music, but in reality she was heart-hungry for a little sympathy and kindness in her sickness. She had done her best to estrange her husband, and felt she deserved but little attention from him. Indeed he thought she was better pleased when he stayed away. He was willing enough to show her every attention and kindness, but did not know how to set about it.

Ena found her trying to read to herself, her eyesight was very bad, but the reading of her maid irritated her beyond endurance.

When they had arranged about the church music and the choir practices, which were to be resumed, Ena offered to read to her.

'Will you?' she asked in a pleased tone, 'but I am afraid you are too tired after your journey.' She assured the poor invalid that the journey from London had been so short, it had not tired her at all.

When Mr Kobin looked in an hour later, he found his wife calmly sleeping among her cushions, and Ena preparing to leave. They went out on tiptoe. Sleep was what the querulous invalid most needed, and found so difficult to obtain.

## ENA

After that Ena had to go daily, sometimes she read, at others told her of school or parochial incidents that might interest or amuse her. Strange to say the old lady took a great fancy to Jessie who was so sullen with most people, but became greatly attached to Mrs Kobin. The child would sit as she had done with her grandma, without saying a word for hours, but always ready to do any little thing she could.

Ena was afraid her lessons were being too much neglected, so as Mrs Kobin became stronger, she taught her herself; and now Jessie spent each day with her, and the poor lady took an interest in life, she nor any one else would have believed possible a few months earlier. She grew less querulous and, consequently more cheerful, and Mr Kobin enjoyed more tranquillity than he had hoped for in his married life.

But no assistance came from home, and Ena had to go to the village shop and beg the woman who kept it, to allow her account to run till after her examination, when she would pay it in full from her government money. Sometimes the poor girl was overwhelmed with fear lest she should not pass successfully, for then she would lose her grant, and it was all she had to depend upon.

Now and again a letter came from home, but always full of complaints at the drudgery; for Betsy had been discharged by the thrifty husband, who expected and insisted that his wife should do the work herself. Not only that, but help him to gather the fruit, and jog to market in a two wheeled cart, with 'Thomas

## ENA

Sharpe, Market Gardener,' painted in large white letters on the back to save taxation, as no tax was charged if a horse and cart was only used for getting a living, and the occupation plainly set forth upon the vehicle. There she had to stand at a stall, and help him to sell fruit and vegetables, eggs and chickens, fresh pork or whatever he had gotten together, by retail; some of the best customers being her old friends who came to pity and condole with her. Mrs Sharpe wrote once and said Jessie was to go home and help her; but Ena felt it her duty not to deliver the child up to almost slavery and certain ignorance. Harry, whose advice she asked, knowing all the circumstances of the case, thought as she did; though in keeping Jessie herself, they would be unable to marry until Harry's term of missionary work expired, which might range from two to five years, according to the effect the climate had upon his health. There had been some idea of their going out together, but they felt, although they might expose themselves to dangers and privations, they had no right to force them upon Jessie, who would have no choice in the matter, but must face the suffering all the same.

## CHAPTER XXVI

CHRISTMAS came again, and Ena spent the two weeks with Miss Stevens, Jessie stayed with Mrs Kobin.

Harry was to be ordained a priest, and go out early in the spring ; so that this would be the last time they would spend together, till after his return. Ena might perhaps join him there after the first year, if things turned out better than they at present expected, and if an opportunity of escort presented itself.

In the meantime no mortals could have been happier than they. Every available moment they spent together, in the church for service or decoration, where Harry fetched evergreens and cut them up, while Ena wove yards upon yards of wreathing for the pillars. Every one respected their devotion to each other, and their corner was left to them. If any unthinking person joined them, Miss Stevens was on the look-out, and found something to send them elsewhere for.

These happy moments of truest sympathy, and closest intercourse, afforded them many an hour of bright retrospection after the parting which followed, in the private trials of the one, and the privations of the other.

They went for long walks in the crisp frosty air,

## ENA

where Ena never knew, she only realised they were together, and that they would soon be far apart. To look into each other's eyes, to hear each other's voices, the magnetic thrill of their slightest contact, was happiness greater than many of shallower natures and smaller sympathies could comprehend. They said to each other their love, their happiness was too great, too idolatrous. But their dispositions, their tastes, their aims for this world, and their hopes for the next, were so in unison, no discordant note could mar their grand symphony. Added to this was their perfect faith in each other; and how could two young natures be more completely one than they?

But the time of parting came, and no stranger who looked into the sad quiet eyes of the two as their hands and lips met for perhaps the last time in life, would have guessed how many miles of space and years of time were to separate them. Ena sat at the door of the railway carriage, the clanging of bells, the hissing of steam, the shouting of excited voices, the hum of innumerable wheels, and the tread of many feet, all passed unheeded; they lived these few moments as entirely alone as if out of sight and sound of humanity. The question which quivered in each heart being 'Shall we ever meet again?' 'Is this good-bye for ever?' They had still so much to say to each other, but no word came. Their eyes said 'Farewell,' their white lips were mute.

It seemed to Ena that she only roused to a consciousness of her surroundings as she entered the Reading Station, and received an affectionate greeting from

## ENA

Jessie, who seemed to realise something of the sacrifice her sister was making for her sake, and although, with something of her mother's nature, she felt it should be so, was grateful for it. She knew it was only Ena's faithfulness to the trust imposed upon her by Grandma, which had kept her here, to look after her.

Dear old Grandma! Ena began to see and feel some of the trials which had beset her, and she wondered at her unvarying cheerfulness, and resolved to cultivate it in herself; for she felt more and more a disposition to look on the dark side of things. She did not know that most of her depression was caused by over-anxiety, overwork, and lack of proper nourishment. The two girls seldom had any fresh meat, and only eggs when they were at their cheapest. They lived principally upon bread and butter and tea. Ena was so afraid her small store of money would not hold out, and nearly a year yet before she could go assistant mistress. She was revolving the future in her own mind, and wondering what they would be able to do, as they slowly wended their way back to Grassmore in the carrier's cart. She was afraid of the expense of a cab. Six shillings was a great deal of money to her now; and the carrier took them and their luggage for one shilling. The man put them down at the schoolhouse, carried in their valise, and wished them 'Good afternoon!'

Miss Watkins had not yet arrived, so they made fires and warmed up the house, and then indulged in tea, with some rashers of bacon added, which they greatly enjoyed after their journey.

## ENA

Everything was bright and cheerful when Miss Watkins arrived in the evening. She told Ena, she thought the school, which had never reached its full standard of attendance since the fever, would not be allowed a pupil teacher in her fourth year: as the number and age of assistants was regulated, not only by the successfully passed examinations of the children, in the three Rs, as English rudimentary education in the National Schools is termed, but also by average attendance; and naturally the average had been greatly diminished by the closing of the school, and the small attendance both before the fever epidemic reached its height, and after.

Ena could be transferred to another school, or take one for herself, Miss Watkins continued, 'I don't see why you take the church music for nothing; I wouldn't if I could play.'

Ena said she was only too glad to be of use.

'Oh yes! that's all very well,' said the more practical school-mistress, 'but if you go on living the way you are now, you'll be like the old woman's cow that learnt to live without eating.'

Ena laughed, but felt there was much truth in it.

'Now, if you stay here, ask for ten pounds a year for playing in church, it would buy meat for you, and two growing girls have no business to be without it.'



## CHAPTER XXVII

ENA found the question of going elsewhere was a serious one for her, as the average attendance did not allow of a pupil teacher in her year.

Miss Watkins talked it over with her. She would be at the end of her fourth year in the spring, so they decided that, after her examination she should look for a school.

She wrote to the old clergyman at home, and explained her position as nearly as she could; asking him to speak for her should a suitable school present itself to his knowledge. She would not have gained her certificate, and was eligible only for an Endowed School; these were fewer and more difficult to obtain than the National Schools. So things were left for the present.

Miss Watkins was very kind at this time, she liked Jessie's quiet ways, but stood rather in awe of Ena.

In the meantime came news of Harry's hurried departure, which saved them the misery of fresh good-byes.

Ena's time now being so fully occupied between the church music, school, her own studies, and the music lessons and practice of Jessie, she had little time for brooding. Then there was a fortnightly gleam of brightness, when a letter with a foreign post mark was

## ENA

handed to her by the old postman. Somehow she was generally near the school gate, and quite at hand to take it herself. The old man would shake his head knowingly and smile as he turned away.

About this time she had a letter from the old clergyman at Skifton, telling her of a school in the parish of his son-in-law, about fifteen or twenty miles from Skifton, at Fenend, an outlying district as its name implied, in the 'fen country,' and where a small church had just been built.

He wrote, 'My dear child, we feel, although you are so young, such a complete trust in your worthiness and truth, we do not hesitate to offer it to you. What we do hesitate about is the smallness of the salary, only twenty-five pounds a year; it will hardly keep body and soul together, and there is neither school-house nor rooms, or school for the matter of that, as a movable partition is to be placed across the west end of the church, for school purposes, and removed for Sundays. If you feel you can undertake this charge we shall be very glad; but, should anything better offer, by all means accept it in preference.'

She showed this letter to Mr and Mrs Kobin, and told them she thought she ought to accept it. So it was agreed that Ena should go to Fenend, and that Jessie should remain with Mrs Kobin for a while; that is she would live at the school house, and spend part of each day with Mrs Kobin.

Her examination had been successful, and she obtained her government money. She paid the bill at the village shop, bought what few actual necessities

## ENA

they required, packed her precious piano, and was ready for a fresh start.

She wrote to her mother, saying she would be there for a few days to see her, and prepare for her new position. Accordingly she once more found herself at Granston Station, with Sam waiting on the platform to receive her. He had grown so much, and being such a dark lad, his moustache quite showed upon his lip. Altogether his appearance assured her of his steadiness. She knew he had very little to keep him, so she went to his lodging with him, looked through his clothes, and took a lot home with her to wash and mend. She had never thought but her mother would attend to all that for him. When Ena mentioned it to her, she had so much to do she said, 'she had no time; since poor mother was gone, and Sam away, there was no one to do anything.'

Sam and Ena started cheerfully out to walk to Skifton, it being Saturday, and after office hours; when who should they run against but Alf and Mattie Flint. Mattie had for once come into town behind one of her brother's fast horses; but it was only to consult her old music master concerning some difficulty she found in getting up Kuhe's *Home Sweet Home*, which she felt unable to cope with alone.

'You must drive home with us, Ena,' they said, 'we can't get Sam in too, or we would.'

'You'll be dreadfully crowded with three in a gig,' objected Ena.

'That's nothing,' laughed Alf in his good-humoured way, 'I only wish the ride was for life.' He looked at

## ENA

her earnestly; then noticing the ring on her left hand, upon which she was drawing her glove, asked, 'Is it for Harry Linwood?'

'Yes,' she said simply.

'Then he's a happy man!' and they started in silence for Skifton.

There was some laughter at the way the two girls had to sit upon each other; and the little scream of alarm from Mattie every time the horse gave an extra plunge forward; but otherwise Ena was glad when they set her down at her mother's door. She had an uncomfortable feeling with regard to Alf, which she had never experienced before. Mattie promised to drop in during the evening, and so they said good-bye for the present.

Mrs Sharp met her doubtfully, not knowing how her husband would take the visit of this grown-up looking daughter.

'Really, it makes one feel quite old to look at you, Ena,' she complained, 'you really might pass for five-and-twenty; and in mourning yet; so tall as you are too, quite over my shoulders.'

'Over your head, you mean, Mother,' laughed Sam who just entered, having had a ride home too.

Mr Sharp looked in, and taking in the situation, said, 'Really, Mrs Sharp, it does make you look old, and feel old too, I should say, to see such a house full at once. The little 'un as isn't too stuck-up yet, and might be made a bit useful, ain't come, I see.'

Turning to Ena, he asked, 'How long may it be your pleasure to put up here, young woman?'

## ENA

'Only a few days,' faltered the girl, 'while I get ready to go to my school.'

'Well, well! I might jest as well tell ye, fust as last, I ain't a-going to hev no lazy planner playin' hangers-on loafin' round here.'

Turning to Sam, he continued, 'You've sneaked yer keep out o' me two or three times young man, an' I should advise you not to try it on too orften.'

'Sir!' said Ena flashing up, 'this was our father's home, and you are the Interloper! Tell us, mother, if you wish us to stay or not?'

'I've nothing to say in the matter,' whimpered Mrs Sharpe, 'he's master here now.' Then catching Ena's grieved look she added, 'But I should like you to stay just a few days, Ena; it's so long since I had a talk with anyone, and I want to hear all about your engagement, and all that, you know.' To Mr Sharp she said with unconscious irony, 'She won't eat much, she never had a great appetite.'

'Well, I suppose "the interloper" must put up with whatever you like; only don't try on too much on't, that's all.'

Ena found, like most bullies, he was easily cowed, and set herself to renovating her own and Sam's clothing, and went out very little. She had never known her mother to cling to her so much before. When good Mrs Linwood came and claimed her for awhile, Mrs Sharp would not hear of her going; but as Mrs Linwood pointed out how tired and thin Ena looked, and that it was rest she needed, she consented; and for the next ten days Ena was petted and fussed

## ENA

over to the heart's content of all the Linwood family, which we know was rather numerous.

Annie and Ena took long healthful walks; and were never tired of discussing Harry, and everything connected with him.

As for Mrs Linwood, in having Ena with her, she felt as if she had part of her darling boy.

But time passed on, and Ena once more started out alone to Fenend, where Annie said she should go and stay with her after Harvest holidays.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

ENA found Fenend flat and uninteresting. An old farm house had been secured by Mr Hillbert, the curate in charge, and made very comfortable by his sister. The house was old, but climbing ivy of many years standing beautified the front, and it stood back in a garden which was a tangle of flowers, fruit trees, currant and gooseberry bushes, raspberry canes and vegetables, certainly more useful than ornamental, but that quality agreed with Miss Hillbert's idea of the fitness of things. No one was better qualified to bring a new parish into shape than she, for she had a natural faculty for managing both people and things, and which only seemed to come out in greater force from the years it had perforce lain dormant. This house, moreover, was just across the road from the new church.

Ena was not so fortunate, she had to take a room more than a mile away; and, although this was all very well during the summer months, and the enforced walk probably did her good, yet she often felt strangely tired after it.

She passed many of the cottages on her way to school in which the children lived, and you would see them hurrying out after her, the little ones holding on to her skirts and her hands, toddling and chattering

## ENA

along, their admiring mothers gazing after them as they went.

Several of the elder girls were within a few months of Ena's age, but they became so attached to her, there was no trouble in their management, except of one very sullen girl, who would occasionally hold out, but Ena's quiet firmness conquered in the end.

For the Harvest holidays, Ena decided that Jessie should come to her, and that they should spend them together at Fenend. She knew Mr Sharpe would object to their going home, and she felt she could hardly put such a slight upon her mother, as to stay elsewhere in Skifton; although the Linwoods were greatly exercised that she refused to come to them.

They did the next best thing, however; they sent Annie with a well filled hamper of good things, who stayed three weeks with her, and then persuaded Ena to go back for the remainder of the vacation. She was rather surprised at Jessie's eagerness to see her mother, and make acquaintance with her step-father; and, as soon as they arrived in Skifton Jessie went straight to them. She told her mother she was tired of school, and did not want to go back, and that Ena had not allowed her enough to eat.

She should scarcely have complained as her bill for living was a little over twice as much as her sister's, and yet there was nothing beside actual necessities charged; but while Jessie had had sufficient, Ena had not. This summer's vacation brought back some of the hues of health to Ena's cheeks, and her visit to the Linwood's did much to restore her spirits.



## ENA

Nothing was seen of Jessie for a few days, not even when Annie and Ena went to see Mrs Sharpe; then, she suddenly appeared at the Linwood's, her hair in disorder, her face almost black except where the tears had rained down, and her few belongings in her arms.

It seemed she had been left to look after the house, and do the Saturday's cleaning, while Mr and Mrs Sharpe went to market. She swept and scrubbed and worked with a will. A cooked supper was to be ready by seven o'clock, and Jessie had peeled the potatoes, and the cabbage and pork were boiling merrily over the big hearth by three. But she never thought of feeding a sty full of little pigs; they becoming hungry, broke out, got amongst Mr Sharpe's vegetables and made short work of them, rooting up and destroying what they were unable to eat.

When Mr and Mrs Sharpe arrived home, they found Jessie fast asleep, tired out with her unwonted exertions. The fire had gone out, the pot boiled dry, and its contents were spoiled. This was bad enough in Mr Sharpe's eyes, but when he discovered the havoc the pigs had made, he was beside himself with rage, and frightened poor Jessie almost out of her wits.

When the storm had somewhat subsided, and Mr Sharpe had gone after his pigs, her mother turned upon her, and scolded her for showing such ingratitude, after her own goodness in taking her home again. 'It's a shame to bring such trouble on me!' she cried. This astonished poor Jessie, who had at least expected sympathy from her mother. She rushed upstairs to the garret which had been assigned her, (every avail-

## ENA

able room in the house being let) gathered up her things, and fearing lest Mr Sharpe should see her, and make her come back, had run with all her might to the school-house, taking the short cut across the fields where Ena had had her adventure with the bull.

It was just as well Jessie should see for herself how impossible it would be for her to live at home under the rule of Mr Sharpe, and Ena felt thankful she had not left the child to such guardianship. Grandma had been right, and she must stand by her as long as necessary. Jessie being convinced that her personal comfort depended upon her sister, was more docile, and when she returned to school with Ena, did so without that secret feeling that she ought to be at home.

In the meantime the sewing and renovating of garments went merrily on; and under Mrs Linwood's experienced hands it was wonderful what a good showing they made; and how clothes Ena had felt in despair over turned out to be quite respectable.

Mrs Linwood's health had been steadily failing, and Ena felt with a pang 'what would Harry do if anything happened to his mother while he was away.' By many things she said, Ena knew she felt it would be likely she would never see him again, that is if he stayed away his full term.

## CHAPTER XXIX

JESSIE, contented and grateful for the kindnesses shown her by her sister and friends, Ena returned to her own work with more courage than she had felt since Harry's departure; determined to 'make ends meet' somehow. The school increased to its fullest capacity, some children coming from the neighbouring parish of Deacons Drove, where there was a school-master; and she was kept very hard at work, but her salary remained the same.

As winter was coming on Miss Hilbert and she planned to open a night school for men and boys; they had begged light and fuel from the Rector; and, as they taught without any fees, their school soon required the assistance of Mr Hilbert as well.

The winter proved to be one of those humid ones, when this part of the country is enveloped in a dense white mist, which reaches into the very bones of those exposed to it. Ena went to school at nine in the morning and returned at twelve day after day, when a person three feet in front of you was indistinguishable; the only way you could keep the road was by looking down, and being careful not to step off into the ditches which drained it on either side.

When night school was to be held in such weather

## ENA

she seldom went home to her tea at four o'clock, and would remain in her saturated boots till nine, when she would return with some of the boys who passed her way, chilled to the bone. But she was afraid to light a fire for fear of using up her little stock of coal, which seemed to go so quickly whether she had a fire or not; so she would get some hot water from the woman of the house to make her tea; and then creep shivering into bed, where she would lie awake for hours, her feet too cold to allow of her sleeping. She had arranged with the woman to get Jessie's tea, and see her to bed at the right time.

One evening however, at night-school, her very lips were bloodless, and Miss Hilbert coming in with her usual hustle and rush could not help noticing it.

'I looked out for you at four o'clock, Miss Hetherington, my brother said it was a shame you should go twice through that fog, I wanted you to take tea with us, but I didn't see you.'

'I didn't go, Miss Hilbert, I was afraid I shouldn't be able to get back.'

'What! don't you feel well?' said the other quickly, she was beginning to like Ena, since she found her brother possessed no particular attraction for her. She had never imagined a lady-like girl, such as Ena was, would have come to this out-of-the-way place to teach, and had been pleased with herself for being there to look after him. She had heard in the village of Ena's foreign letters of course, and seeing she wore an engagement ring, felt secure. Strange to say, she had never noticed that the three weeks Annie was there, her

## ENA

brother had been almost constantly with her ; and since her departure, letters came at stated intervals addressed to him in a feminine hand. The post mistress had thought ; and, understanding perfectly well, that Miss Hilbert, who was many years her brother's senior, would object to such a thing, always kept them till he came in for some trifle, or just to chat, as he did about the time these missives should arrive. No word upon the subject had passed between them, but each understood the other perfectly ; and, womanlike, the post mistress was delighted to assist in a romance.

Ena prepared for her class as usual, that is to all outward appearance ; but every now and then her head swam so she was confused, and her feet felt like lumps of ice, she could scarcely drag them round.

Mr Hilbert had just received a letter from Annie, in which she told him the doctor said, Mrs Linwood must undergo a painful operation in about a month's time. Her one wish was to see Harry again, and the young man had been sent for, as the re-action caused by his coming might assist in taking her through.

Dr Flint senior, had said, 'I have little hope for her myself, but I think everything in reason should be done to save the life of this good woman, who as wife and mother has lived her unselfish life under my very eyes.'

Ena turned as he spoke, but she did not see the letter he held in his hand, for she fell forward in a heavy swoon, which lasted so long they were afraid she was dead.

Miss Hilbert ran over to her house and got some

## ENA

brandy, which they forced between the drawn white lips.

A man who came to night school as much for a little variety to his existence as from any desire to improve himself, ran for his mistress, and told her of Ena's condition. It was the only farm house in that part of the village, the rest being mostly the cottages of the farm-hands, a shoemaker's, a small shop and so on. She was a kind and motherly woman, who had liked the quiet school-mistress, and had said if she had only known what kind of a young lady she was, she should have had a room in her house, and welcome, but unfortunately neither the Hilberts nor Ena knew this. Her daughter and only child had died of a fever upon the eve of her marriage, leaving a break in the good old lady's life that a horde of nephews and nieces never could fill. As soon as she saw Ena she sent the man post haste for Dr Stokes. 'Don't spare the horse, James,' she said, 'but tell the doctor we must have him here quick as he can come.' Then she proceeded to examine the poor girl's feet, and drew attention to their saturated condition, pointing out the fact that the floor of the church being of glazed bricks, there was little chance for her feet to dry, and none of their becoming warm.

'We must get her to bed as soon as possible, and put hot water bottles to her feet,' she said to Miss Hilbert.

'Take her over to my place,' commanded Mr Hilbert, without referring to his sister.

Miss Hilbert was surprised, but could make no objection, for she had a very kind heart at bottom

## ENA

despite her desire to manage everybody, and everybody's affairs.

The men carried Ena over in a chair, and the two women undressed her, and put her into a bed which they had heated with a warming-pan; that is a utensil usually made of brass, as large round as a frying pan, but a little deeper, and covered by a hinged lid, in which holes have been punched in a pattern of some kind; this being fitted with a long handle, has some clear live coals put in it, and is drawn up and down from the foot of the bed several times, making it very warm. Then they put bottles filled with hot water to her feet, and gave her more brandy.

When Dr Stokes arrived she was staring at the ceiling with wide open brilliant eyes, which saw nothing, and recognised no one.

He felt her pulse, and shook his head, then he drew back her sleeve, looked at her arm and then at her chest.

'Couldn't any of you see that this is a case of starvation!' he asked, pointing to the emaciated arms, and the fleshless chest, 'What has she been doing here, and where did she live?'

They told him, as he descended the stairs.

'Go and look at her larder, and you'll find little there but bread and tea. And with such weather as this! I suppose her boots and clothing match the diet. Really there's nothing like the cruelty of you women to one another!' and he turned indignantly to the well fed, healthy-looking Miss Hilbert.

'I saw she didn't look well,' she returned apologetic-

ENA

ally, 'but I couldn't ask her what she had to eat, or wear, could I doctor?' and Miss Hilbert escaped to the sick room.

'How much did she get a year?' he asked of Mr Hilbert.

'Twenty-five pounds.'

'Twenty-five pounds!' he was in the warm parlour, and stamped and fumed, 'Isn't it a shame! A cook would get more than that, and her board and pickings thrown in.'

'Really, you know, I wouldn't have dared to interfere with Miss Hetherington, she was so quiet and retiring; and I have no idea what is required to keep a young lady,' stammered Mr Hilbert in remorse, 'but I know she is providing for a younger sister as well.'

'Well, well, all I have to say is she's starved, and if she pulls through this, it will be by the sheer tenacity some young things have to life.'

'As serious as that doctor?'

'As serious as that!' he repeated irritably. 'I should have thought any one who has seen her for the last month must have seen it coming on.'

'You forget, doctor, we clergy can't distinguish these physical ills, as you can. I did notice her depression, but I thought it might be owing to the absence of young Linwood; she's engaged to him, and he's gone abroad on mission work. She wouldn't go with him, as her grandmother left the youngest sister in her charge; and they thought they ought not to expose the child to mission life.'

'Linwood, who went to Zanzibar?'



## ENA

'Yes.'

'It's just as well she didn't go there. His mother is to undergo a dangerous operation, and they've sent for him. Poor child! starvation of heart as well as body! We shall have a hard task to pull her through!'

He went on to speak of Mrs Linwood. 'The best faculty in the county are interested in the case, and Flint is so determined to do all he can for her, he intends to get the specialist from London. We've already consulted upon the case. His professional talk had run away with him, and he had not taken his usual keen note of his companion.

'Do all you can, Stokes! don't let money stand in the way; you can have all I've got!' and he caught the doctor's hand. He thought the young man had suddenly taken leave of his senses, and looked at him for an explanation.

Mr Hilbert took out his letter and said, 'This is from her daughter. I only met her for three weeks, when she was staying with Miss Hetherington; but my very life is bound up in her. I can feel for Linwood; but I can't understand how they could sacrifice themselves for any younger sister; they did more than I could. It's only been the continued illness of Annie's mother which has kept me from carrying out my first intention of marrying at once; and only by Annie's entreaty that our engagement has been kept to ourselves because her mother is so unselfish, she wouldn't feel justified in letting Annie forego everything for her sake, whereas she depends upon her

## ENA

daughter entirely. Of course I've seen her father, and written to Linwood, and they both approve.'

'My dear fellow,' said the good doctor, 'you're a lucky man to secure the affections of the daughter of such a woman; I only wish you hadn't let Miss Hetherington run down so, and that Linwood may let nothing keep him; for, I think the lives of these two women, under God mind, depend upon whether he's here for the crisis or not. They are both of a highly strung, nervous and sensitive disposition; "mind over matter" all the time with such as they, and it's truly marvellous what that temperament can pull through with sometimes.'

The groom now arrived with the medicine the doctor had been waiting for, as he wished to see its effect upon Ena.

'I'm going to see your sister now,' he said as he got up to leave the room, 'and I shall expect her to carry out my instructions to the letter.'

Whatever he said to Miss Hilbert, certain it is that the invalid had the best of care. A trained nurse was sent for, and the struggle for life went on. It was pitiful to see the strained eyes and flushed face of the poor girl; when the Eau de Cologne and water was put upon her head, the steam from it rose visibly.

'Keep a fire night and day,' ordered the doctor upon one of his visits, 'it will create a current of air, and no fire can heat the room more than that poor child's body does.'

Seven days and no decrease in the fever, which Dr Stokes had pronounced to be Typhoid. Fourteen, and

## ENA

rather an increase; twenty-one, and no abatement, no continued sleep, but a gradual weakening of the sufferer.

Dr Stokes got very anxious. 'Would that young rascal never come?' he said to himself. For she was sinking, and it required more than medicine to rouse her.

She seemed to know them sometimes, but was too weak to speak above a whisper. 'Water! Water!' she begged, if they would only give her water. She turned her burning eyes to the jug on the washstand. If she could only reach that! but she was unable to stand, and they would only give her wine and water or new milk.

Twenty-eight days; the doctor stayed by her all that night, and to her constant cry for water, at last consented. Four o'clock; he was glad she had survived two o'clock, as he felt that had been the most fatal hour for her, when there was so little electricity in the air. She had fainted then, and he had with difficulty brought her round. She had fainted several times since then, but he had continued to give her restoratives, and kept life feebly in her.

Why did he watch the door, and get so restless as the night wore on? Miss Hilbert was puzzled; her brother too had been away all day, and was not home yet.

Half-past four: Ena looked as if no breath was in her body, but the fever had left her, and she knew them. The exhaustion, however, was so great. Dr Stokes was afraid to give an opinion, although implored to do so, over and over again by a silent gesture from Miss Hilbert.

## ENA

The seemingly endless night wore on; a quarter to five. The front door in the hall below suddenly opened, and a voice asked through the stillness of the house, 'Which room?'

The doctor watched his patient with a fixed look. She opened her eyes, listened to the footsteps bounding up the stairs, turned her head slightly so as to see the door, and a beaming smile of light and love passed over her face; the doctor said to himself, 'she'll do.'

But as the young man threw himself upon his knees beside her, the eyes closed once more, and such a grey palor overspread the face, the doctor ran to pour a few drops of restorative down her throat, and to lower her head.

Harry thought she was dead and the great cry of anguish he gave did more to rouse her than all else. He was unmanned, poor fellow, he had travelled incessantly since he had received the letter summoning him home; fearing he might be returning to the death-bed of his mother. When he landed Mr Hilbert had met him, and they had come as fast as express could bring them, to what seemed to be the death-bed of his love. And the terrible sobs of a strong man sounded through the room.

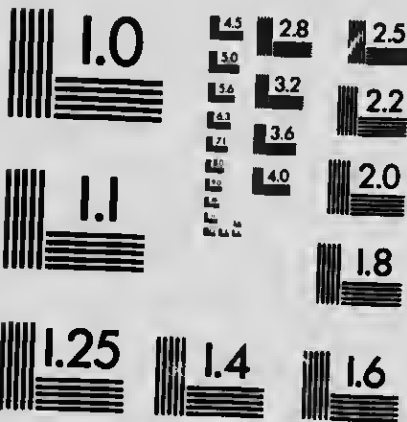
Meanwhile Dr Stokes and Miss Hilbert were doing all in their power to restore Ena. The doctor came to him and said, 'Take her hand, my boy, and speak to her, let her know it's really you. Remember it's you alone, with God's blessing, can save her from a relapse, which must prove fatal. See! her look is wandering.'

They all retired to another part of the room; and



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## ENA

Harry, too shaken to speak, sat down beside her, and gently took her hand.

Presently she whispered, 'Harry?'

'It's me, love,' he said, and pillowing the weary head upon his arm, fondly stroked the closely cropped hair. She seemed soothed and contented, and after a few minutes was sleeping quietly, as she had not done for at least a month; and no doubt some time before.

The watchers crept silently out, the doctor putting his finger to his lips, told Harry not to move, and that when she woke he would give her a soothing draught.

She didn't wake for four hours; the doctor who had never left the house, gave her some concentrated nourishment, and then the soothing draught, and laid her back among fresh, cool pillows. Harry sat there till she went to sleep again, which was only a few minutes, and with a smile on her face for him. This sleep lasted till seven o'clock in the evening. Dr Stokes had been in the house since six, expecting she would wake then. He said all danger was passed if proper care was given to nourishment and sleep, and no excitement allowed.

She was too weak to enquire into the presence of Harry, so the critical condition of his mother was unknown to her; and when he said he would have to be away for a few days, and asked her to promise to sleep as much as possible in that time, and take the nourishment given; she promised, and with her old faithfulness kept to it.

He returned from his mother, who had bravely faced her ordeal, as the old doctor knew she would, with her

## ENA

husband by her, and her son near at hand. Indeed the sudden joy of knowing Harry was on his way, greatly revived her, and proved a great factor in her ultimate recovery.

After three weeks Ena was removed by easy stages, to Mrs Linwood's, and the invalids made merry together, helping each other back to health and strength in a marvellous manner.



## CHAPTER XXX

Now Dr Stokes was a widower, with a houseful of growing daughters, which he had not the slightest idea what to do with. He had noticed Miss Hilbert's powers of management and admired her for them. So he one day paid a visit to Fenend, which was not professional, and told her what he thought, and what he hoped she would do.

'Well, just to try my powers of management,' she laughed. To the astonishment and annoyance of his household the doctor announced his intention of bringing home a mamma for the girls, and a mistress for the house; when he should return from his much needed holiday, and warned them all to be ready to receive her.

Of course all five girls were there, dressed in their newest and gayest frocks; the material had taken their young fancy in the shop windows, and Papa had said they could all have new dresses; it had likewise pleased the old housekeeper, who was naturally more indulgent than judicious. They sat round the untidy, uncomfortable looking parlour, as the doctor followed Mrs Stokes, and neither came forward nor spoke a word. That was the right way to do, they had been told, by one of the servants.

'Here girls,' said the doctor cheerfully, 'is your new

## ENA

Mamma that I told you was going to manage us all for the future.' Turning to his wife he said, 'You'll have your hands full, my dear!' Then he fled to the surgery.

She looked helplessly at them, and saw they ranged from the ages of five to twelve. She and her brother had only come to this part of the country, when he had taken charge of Fenend, a little over a year before, and consequently knew little of their neighbours. She tried to speak to them, noticed that her husband had disappeared, broke down and cried; a most unheard-of thing for her to do.

Then followed the strangest part of all, the eldest, who had promised great sport to the others from her rebellion, which was to be systematic and complete, went up to where Mrs Stokes sat with her face in her hands; literally bowed down by the weight of her responsibility, and touching her hand said, 'Don't cry, Mamma, we'll be good.'

The others looked on open-eyed at their sister and leader, wondering what was coming next.

At the magic word 'Mamma!' Mrs Stokes put down her hands, looked for an instant at the face bending down to her, and taking the child in her arms, kissed her and called her 'my own dear girl.'

The others all pressed round her now for welcome. Then she took them to her room, and they all fell to unpacking a certain box, which contained presents for each from Paris.

'How could papa afford such nice things?' they exclaimed, 'Or did you get them for us? Isn't it nice to

## ENA

have things too, as well as Lucy Miles. She's got a pony you know, Mamma, and she says, we can't afford things like hers, but these are better than hers. Her governess says we ain't fit for Lucy to play with, we're only like servants. Isn't that nasty?' and they prattled away discontentedly, as children will.

'Never mind what Lucy Miles says, it's not nice to talk like that. You shall have a governess, and a pretty pony to ride, too, and go to the seaside with me; and do lots of things other girls do.'

The doctor had never doubted that the new head of the household would 'hold her own,' but he was hardly prepared to see such good will established as greeted him, when he ventured to put in his head, and ask if there was to be any dinner that day.

Of course Mrs Stokes soon remodelled the household, only retaining the former housekeeper as nurse, for she was really attached to the children. She set up her own pony carriage, and you would see it bowling along with girls and governess, driven by Mrs Stokes, and followed by one of the girls on a pony.

The good doctor found so much comfort at home, that the strain of his profession was much less upon him; and the income, which had never been fully adequate before, was more than sufficient now. So Mrs Stokes spent her own on the higher education of 'her girls.'

Poor children, their own mother had died when the youngest was a baby, so they had never known her care; and they turned with affection to this kind heart, and duly appreciated her good management on their behalf.

## CHAPTER XXXI

FENEND was so dreadfully neglected by its curate in charge, that Annie left her mother in the hands of Harry and Ena; and, after a quiet wedding, went to look after it, and him. They lived there for two years, and there a little boy was born, the first of a houseful of sons and daughters. A living was then presented to Mr Hilbert in the north of England; and, though not very rich in itself, had a good house and grounds, and what they liked better, plenty of scope for work. There they lived to a good old age, and many rose up to 'call them blessed.'

Mrs Winton wrote, begging Harry to take his mother and Ena, and go with her to Naples, where poor Miss Stevens was to spend the winter; and where, in her own heart, she knew she would remain, and be laid beside her mother 'till the trumpet call.'

There they had sojourned for some six weeks, when Miss Stevens telegraphed to Mr Winton to come to her. He lost no time in obeying the summons, fearing the worst for their dearly loved friend. He hastened to her upon his arrival and found only Mrs Linwood with her, the other three were upon one of their excursions in the neighbourhood.

'Don't be alarmed,' she said, with her usual consideration for others, 'I'm no worse; but I love those

## ENA

dear children, and should like to see them happy while I can still enjoy that pleasure.'

So Harry and Ena were quietly married by Mr Winton in the same church to which Miss Stevens' remains were carried a few weeks later, for her prayer had been heard, and the end was speedy.

When her will was read it was found that she had left ten thousand pounds to Mrs Winton, and five thousand to Harry and Ena. The rest of her large fortune was judiciously invested for the benefit of the different Homes and Hospitals she had supported during her lifetime.

Ena and Harry invested some of their fortune for the benefit of Mrs Sharpe, gave Sam the professional advantages he needed; and, leaving Jessie in Mrs Linwood's good care, went to take up the new duties assigned Harry in Honolulu.

END

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