

MISCELLANEOUS

THE LONG JOURNEY.

When our feet become heavy and weary
On the valleys and mountains of life,
And the road has grown dusty and dreary,
And we groan in the struggle and strife,
We halt on the difficult pathway,
Glance back over valley and plain,
And sigh with a sorrowful longing
To travel the journey again.

For we know in the past there are pleasures,
And seasons of joy and delight,
While before all is doubting and darkness,
And dread of the gloom and the night;
All bright sunny spots we remember—
How little we thought of them then!
But now we are looking and longing
To rest in those places again.

But vain of the vainest is sighing,
Our course must be forward and on;
We cannot turn back on the journey,
We cannot enjoy what is gone,
Let us hope, then, as onward we travel
That oases may brighten the plain,
That our road be beside the sweet waters,
Though we may not begin it again.

For existence forever goes upward—
From the hills to the mountain we rise,
On, on, o'er invisible summits,
To a land in the limitless skies,
Strive on, then, with courage unshaken—
True labor is never in vain—
No glance with regret on the pathway
No mortal can travel again.

GRACE NORMAN'S VICTORY.

'I wonder if I shall ever feel at home here, or be happy again?' Grace Norman said aloud as she glanced around the chill school-room at Wingfield Manor; 'it's all so different from what I expected and hoped.'

Bravely she brushed away her tears, and began to examine the dusty bookshelves, while she waited for some one to welcome her to Wingfield Manor.

She was a tall slender girl, with sad dark eyes, and a very pale face, and her simple black dress added to the melancholy of her appearance. She felt very solitary and unhappy as her thoughts flew back to her own old home a pleasant little vicarage nestling in a pleasant valley. But sorrow found its way even into that peaceful spot; first her mother was taken from her, then her father died quite suddenly, and Grace Norman found herself, at sixteen, alone in the world, and quite unprovided for. She had no relatives save Mr. Wingfield, a distant cousin of her mother's, and he wrote offering her a home at the Manor, till something could be decided on as to her future.

She arrived in the afternoon, and learned that Mrs. Wingfield and Miss Ada were out driving, and then a servant conducted her to the dusty and depressing school-room to await their return; Grace smiled sadly through her tears as she remembered how differently strangers had been welcomed at her father's vicarage. No one, no matter how poor or humble, was ever received with such chilling coldness. Then she began to wonder about Ada; would she be kind and affectionate, or stiff and formal? was she a grown up young lady, and done with lessons (a glance around the dusty school-room made that seem very probable), or was she a child who had not yet commenced to learn? In the midst of these reflections the door opened, and Mrs. Wingfield entered, followed by a beautiful child of ten or eleven, who hung back with a shy almost silent expression, and glanced at Grace with a scowl that totally disfigured her extremely pretty features.

'Come and shake hands with your new cousin, Ada, and say you are pleased to see her,' Mrs. Wingfield said kindly, after having given Grace a cordial welcome; but Ada refused to make any advances, and frowned defiantly.

'Come and have some tea,' Mrs. Wingfield continued pleasantly; 'Ada has had a long drive, and is very tired, and I dare say you are tired too, Grace and will be glad to go to your room; but come and have some tea first.'

As Grace rose to follow her hostess, Ada rushed rudely in front and seized her mother by the hand. It was unkind as well as rude, and poor Grace felt it keenly. She did not know that Ada was an only child and very much spoiled, and that she had taken it into her pretty, wilful head to bitterly resent her cousin's coming to the manor. But then Ada was jealous of every one her father or mother took the slightest notice of, and caused herself and those who loved her a great deal of misery.

'You must try and make yourself at home and be happy with us, Grace,' Mrs. Wingfield said, taking no further notice of Ada. 'You can walk in the grounds and gardens, and there are plenty of books, and then you and your little cousin will soon become friends, I hope. She is shy and sadly spoiled, so you must try and be patient with her. I may as well tell you now that Mr. Wingfield intends to place you in a first-rate school, where you will receive a thorough education, and so be able to earn your own living some day; but, for the present, you must consider this your home, and you must practice and continue your studies.'

'Thank you very much,' Grace said shyly. 'You are very good!'

'But you don't like lessons, do you?' Ada cried suddenly. 'You don't want to practice!'

'Yes, indeed I do. I love music and lessons, was the eager reply; and Ada looked considerably astonished; then her brow clouded, and she turned away with a burst of tears. 'Mamma, I don't want Grace Norman here; send her away,' she cried passionately.

'My dear, you must not talk like that; go straight to your room directly,' her mother said gravely and sadly. 'And you, Grace, must not mind anything Ada says this afternoon; she is not quite herself.'

Grace forced back her tears as well as she could, and then said good night, as she was very tired. Her welcome to Wingfield Manor had not been a very cheerful one.

CHAPTER II.

'Grace dear, do you know anything of Ada? She said she was going to the school-room to you.'

'I have not seen her since breakfast,' Grace replied, looking up from a drawing she was finishing; 'but I will go at once and look for her.'

'Do, please, dear; if she is out of sight for a moment, I am terrible anxious about her, as she is nearly sure to be into some mischief,' and Mrs. Wingfield sighed deeply as she thought what a great trouble her only child was, and how difficult she found it to manage or control her.

Grace Norman had been three months at the manor, and yet there was no word of her going away to school. She was very useful to her aunt and uncle, as she called Mrs. and Mr. Wingfield, and had become a general favorite with the whole household. Her patient gentleness and unvarying good temper had won her a way to all hearts save Ada's; she was still rude, ungracious, and jealous, and never lost an opportunity of teasing her cousin. It was enough for Grace to express admiration for anything for Ada to take a violent dislike to it. She smeared Grace's exercises, smudged her crayon drawings, tore up neatly copied music, and often scribbled over her books, and even tormented her poor little fox-terrier, Buffer, to the verge of distraction. He was a forlorn, friendless little creature, that had strayed into the manor garden one day, and as Grace seemed to pity the creature deeply, Mr. Wingfield said she might keep him. Ever since, Buffer had been her greatest friend and companion, for Ada persistently refused to make friends with her cousin. But Buffer was as good-tempered and forgiving as his mistress, and never bore malice for the teases he received; and when Grace left the school room to seek Ada, he followed her, gravely wagging his tail, as if deploring the necessity of such an expedition.

'How differently it would be if we were only friends, if Ada loved me and permitted me to love her,' Grace mused, as she hurried through the gardens, and across the thickly wooded park in search of her cousin. 'How much happier uncle and aunt would be too; and, most of all, how much pleasanter it would be for Ada herself.'

Grace scarcely knew how truly unhappy Ada's father and mother were about her; she could not realize the care and anxiety the child's wilfulness and intractability caused them. They had hoped at first that Grace's presence would have a beneficial result, but it really seemed as if Ada had grown worse instead of better. Still Grace was always so cheerful and forgiving, so ready with the soft answer that turned away wrath, so inclined to make the very best of her cousin, that they felt her example must in time do Ada good. It was uphill work for poor Grace at times, hard to keep her temper undebauched, tauntings, and unjust reproaches, but she strove always to be patient, and remember that it was better to keep her temper than take a fortress.

'Where can the child be, now. I wonder?' she said aloud as she looked right and left through the Park. 'Can you find her, Buffer?' and the wiggling doggie wagged his tail and set off in the direction of a pond that lay in a remote part of the grounds.

Water-lilies grew there in abundance, and at the breakfast-table Mrs. Wingfield said she would send the gardener for some. Ada, however, had set off at once to gather them, though she had been forbidden to go near the pond. She had just filled her basket, and was turning away, when she slipped on the edge of the water, and rolled in just as Grace and Buffer came in sight.

Without a moment's hesitation, Grace waded into the water, and dragged her cousin to the bank, thoroughly wet and chilled, and almost frightened to death; while Buffer swam out and heroically rescued the empty flower-basket. Terribly frightened herself, and with faltering steps, Grace half-led, half-carried Ada toward the house.

When they were near it, they met Mr. Wingfield hurrying in search of them. He took the half-fainting child in his arms, and, telling Grace to be brave and keep up, they soon reached home, and both girls were warmly wrapped up, and sent to bed to prevent their catching cold.

'Why did you pull me out of the pond, Gracie! If you hadn't come I

should have been drowned,' Ada said next morning with a sort of defiant humility. 'If I had I think it would have served me right; I have been so horrid and unkind to you.'

For answer, Grace bent down and kissed the abashed and troubled face. She knew how much it cost Ada to confess she had been wrong, and made it as easy as possible for her.

'You must thank Buffer, dear,' she said stroking the soft golden hair. 'I should never have gone to the pond but for him? and the doggie wagged his tail in support of that statement.'

Once the barrier of pride and jealousy was broken down, Ada's was no half-hearted repentance or affection. She became warmly attached to Grace, never going anywhere without her, and in a little while Wingfield Manor became a different place. Merry laughter issued from the dingy school-room now transposed and brightened by smiles and good humor.

Grace tried every morning to instruct her cousin, but there was not very much progress made indoors. But in a shady corner of the Park half-hidden by the trees, surrounded by a wealth of fragrant wild flowers, and with a merry little brook chattering cheerily in the distance Grace would read to Ada during the long pleasant summer afternoons, while Buffer dozed lazily beside them. He had become the privileged companion of all their rambles, and Ada was nearly as grateful to him for rescuing her basket as to Grace for saving herself, as it fully proved that the doggie, like his mistress bore no malice. And after a time seeing how much Ada was improved by companionship with her cousin, Mr. Wingfield resolved that Grace should not go to school at all, but share Ada's studies under a competent governess.

So the manor has become Grace Norman's permanent home, and wilful Ada Wingfield her most loving cousin. They are constantly together, and always friends, and Grace feels that it was patience and gentleness conquered Ada's stubborn pride, rather than the fortunate circumstance of pulling her out of the pond.

Whatever the cause, Mr. and Mrs. Wingfield have reason to bless the day that they offered a home to Grace Norman, and the fully appreciate the victory she achieved over their wilful Ada.

READING ALOUD.—If you ask eight people out of ten now, they will tell you that they hate being read to. And why? Because from their childhood they have been unused to it, and used only to such a monotonous drone as robbed even the Arabian Nights of half their charm. The husband, at the end of a hard day's work, returns home to pass the evening absorbed in his book, or dozing over the fire, while his wife takes up her novel or knits in silence. If he read to her, or if he could tolerate her reading to him, there would be community of thought, interchange of ideas, and such discussion as the fusion of two minds into any common channel cannot fail to produce. And it is often the same when the circle is wider. I have known a large family pass the hours between dinner and bedtime, each one with his book or work, afraid to speak above his breath, because 'it would disturb papa.' Is this cheerful or wise, or conducive to that close union in a household which is a bond of strength through life, which the world can neither give nor take away? I cannot blame them, for they already abominable; and it is enough to have endured the infliction of family prayers, gasped and mumbled by the head of the family, to feel that listening to such a delivery for any length of time would be beyond endurance.

But it was not always so. In the last century—even as late as fifty years ago—reading aloud was regarded as an accomplishment worth the cultivation of those—especially those who lived in the country—with pretensions to taste; and it was consequently, far more frequently found enlivening the domestic circle. There were fewer books fewer means of locomotion, fewer pleasures of winter nights outside the four walls of the country parlor. The game of cribbage, or the sonata on the spinnet, did not occupy the entire evening after six o'clock dinner; and Shakespeare and Milton were more familiar to the young generation of those days than they are now—mainly, I feel persuaded because they were accustomed to hear them read aloud. The ear, habituated to the memory in youth than the inattentive eye which rapidly skims a page.

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