

THE
FAIRY-CRAFT OF NATURE.



Death of the Khan.

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The Fairy.

THE FAIRY-CRAFT OF NATURE.

INTRODUCTION.

LUCILLA.—‘Oh mamma, how I wish you would tell me a story before I go to bed—but do let it be a story in which there are some fairies.’

MOTHER.—‘Then it is not a true story that you wish for?’

LUCILLA.—‘Well, mamma, I do like a true story very much,—and yet a fairy tale is so pretty! It is so pleasant to hear about genii, and about fairies and enchanters: now true stories do not say anything about fairies; so I think, dear mamma, I should like a fairy tale best, if you please.’

MOTHER.—‘But suppose I were to tell you a true story as full of marvels as any fairy tale?’

LUCILLA.—‘Oh, that would be delightful! But how could you do that, mamma? You have often told me that fairies and enchanters were only imaginary beings, and did not really exist.’

MOTHER.—‘And I told you what was the truth, my child. But there *is* a Being who works far greater marvels than any you ever read of in your fairy tales, one whose power is shewn not only in great things, but also in the most minute details. From the star which shines in the heavens, down to the diamond which lies hid in the bowels of the earth—from the proud cedar which waves its head aloft, down to the lowly flowret which opens its calyx to

the morning dew ; from the drop of water which is absorbed by the passing breeze, to the stormy waves which are lashed into frenzy by the raging storm—all these beautiful and glorious objects are subject to the sway of the great Being of whom I speak—nay more. He is the Creator of all these marvels !’

LUCILLA.—‘ Mamma, it must be God of whom you are speaking.’

MOTHER.—‘ Yes, my child, you have guessed aright. Do you think that any of the enchanters in your fairy tales have ever worked any marvels which are equal to those wrought by His hand ?’

LUCILLA.—‘ No, mamma, I do not suppose they have ; but then you see it is not quite the same kind of thing as what I mean. If I were a fairy, like those whose adventures I have read, I would strike with my wand this little seed, for instance, or the stone of the cherry which I have just eaten, and I would turn them into . . . oh I don’t know exactly what I would turn them into, but a thousand things . . . according to what I might fancy at the moment—I would have sylphs and little genii to wait upon me—they should fly at my bidding—I would call that fly which is buzzing on the ceiling, or that moth which is fluttering round the candles, and they should tell me their adventures—for, before they had been a fly or a butterfly, they should have been something else, and an enchanter should have given them their present form. Every thing around me, in short, should have been full of life ; even the marble table, and the diamond which sparkles on your finger, mamma, should be beings who could answer my questions.’

MOTHER.—‘ Well, Lucilla, this, which you deem to be only a dream of the imagination, is, in truth, capable of becoming a reality—all nature is instinct with life, and possesses a voice which those who will

may hear. I will give you a talisman by whose help you may interrogate every object which surrounds you, and receive a reply from each. I can assure you, you will hear some very extraordinary things. You will see that all creation is one perpetual scene of enchantment, and you will learn to admire more each day the marvels wrought by the magic wand of the Queen of Fairies !'

LUCILLA.—' Thank you, dear mamma—I shall be so glad to have this talisman. Do pray tell me something about it this very night ; I long to know what you mean, and who this Queen of Fairies, can be.'

MOTHER.—' Listen to me then, and I will give you some account of her.'

FIRST EVENING.

THE QUEEN OF FAIRIES.

THERE was once a fairy, the most beautiful of all fairies ! Nature, (this was her name) was more busily employed than any of her sisters. Her empire was twenty-five thousand miles in circumference, and yet throughout these vast dominions she presided over everything herself. You can therefore imagine that she had but little time to indulge in idleness, and yet she made a point of never neglecting even the minutest concerns—down to the details of her own toilet, all was carefully attended to.

It was curious to observe with what taste she varied her attire ; sometimes a crown of fresh flowers rested on her brow, her dress was festooned with violets and primroses, or embroidered with gold,

pearls, or diamonds ; upon her head waved plumes drawn from the birds of every clime, whilst the most costly productions of all lands were employed in graceful profusion to adorn her royal form. Even the dews of heaven and the bright icicles of earth were adroitly blended among leaves and flowers to heighten their charms by the force of contrast.

Nature was not only beautiful, but she was good ; and yet, would you believe it ? she had an enemy ! This enemy was a powerful enchanter, named Frost, who regularly, during four or five months in every year, carried war into a portion of her dominions. But in truth this was no real enemy,—his power was only put forth at nature's own bidding ;—and though the beautiful plants and flowers vanished at the touch of his wand, it was only that they might enjoy a season of welcome repose, to awake refreshed and radiant with new beauty and energy.

Even in her sleep nature was beautiful ;—Clothed with a robe of snowy whiteness, tipped with hoarfrost fringe of exquisite delicacy and beauty, and ornamented with icy spangles which reflected the hues of the rainbow. The reign of the enchanter was not of long duration ; he was soon commanded to withdraw his wand and take his flight to his ice-built palace in the frozen north, where he holds perpetual sway. Nature now sent forth the winged zephyrs to warm with their gentle breath the frozen earth ; she stretched forth her sceptre, and flowers, bursting into life on every side, filled the air with their fragrance ; the ice-bound streams and rivers, breaking their unwelcome chains, flowed joyously onwards amidst verdant meadows and fertile fields—in short all was bright and sunny throughout the dominions of the good fairy, and the departure of the enchanter Frost was welcomed by all her subjects as a universal festival, which the birds celebrated in blithesome song.

This period had now arrived, the enchanter's reign was at an end ; Nature was even fairer this day than was her wont, a crown of woodbine wreathed her brow—her azure robe was spangled by pearly dew-drops ; her eyes beamed with mild, bright rays, such as the sun sends forth in the beautiful month of May ! Oh ! how lovely she was that day !

She was going forth in regal state to visit her dominions, and shew herself to her loyal subjects. Her chariot, which was formed of the rarest and brightest gems that earth had ever produced, was drawn by milk-white doves. Just as she was about to enter this gorgeous equipage, she espied lying in a corner, a little forgotten seed and a cherry-stone ; she took them in her rosy fingers. ' Nothing in the world,' said she, ' ought to be lost, and never will I suffer anything to lie useless and unemployed in my dominions. You, little seed, who had well-nigh escaped my glance, I now command to take your place in this patch of cultivated ground ; you will there sprout forth, and become a goodly plant. I bestow upon you the name of *Flax-seed*. You, little stone, who have doubtless been cast away by some thoughtless child, after the sweet pulp which surrounded you was gone, do you also take your place in the ground—there you will soon form a plant, then a tree, and you will bear once more those bright rosy cherries which children love so well. Go forth, both of you, on your respective missions. Anew do I bestow upon you life, but I do so upon condition that you should each try to do all the good you can.' She then drew forth from a flask a small grain of a precious substance named *Carbon*, the least particle of which she would never suffer to be lost ; and having placed it also in the ground, she added, ' Do thou also go forth to fulfil thy errand : in this flask thou art nothing ; but, hidden in the bowels of the earth, and subjected to heat and pressure most intense, thou shalt become crystallized in her

womb, and finally assume the form of a diamond—that rare and precious jewel which awakens envy in many a heart—but take heed, while pursuing the high destinies which await thee, that vanity lead thee not astray. Seek *thou* also to accomplish all the good in thy power—at a future day you shall all three appear before me to give me an account of what you have done, and I shall then be able to judge how the mission of each has been fulfilled.’

When the Fairy had thus spoken, she bounded lightly into her chariot; a cloud of warbling birds followed in her train, and a shower of flowers strewed her onward path.

Here then were deposited side by side, almost in the same cradle, three individuals, each destined to lead a far different existence from that of his neighbour; their names were Flax-seed, Cherry-stone, and Brilliant. Thanks to the good fairy’s kindly foresight, they were each surrounded with all that was necessary for their growth and development: at first small and helpless as a new-born infant, they were fostered in the genial lap of Earth, their tender nurse; then acquiring strength and vigour, they sprung up into graceful childhood and energetic youth; passing on from thence by gradual steps to manhood and old age, and finally closing their career by assuming a thousand varied forms. But I think we have talked long enough for to-night. My little Lucilla must now go to sleep, her eyes are already I fancy beginning to close.’

LUCILLA.—‘Oh no, mamma, indeed I am not sleepy yet, and I should so like to know what becomes of Flax-seed, Cherry-stone, and Brilliant.’

MOTHER.—‘Well, to-morrow, my child, they shall themselves tell you their adventures, when they each come before the fairy, to render her an account of their actions, and to hear her verdict upon the conduct they have pursued, and the mode in which they have each fulfilled their respective missions.’

SECOND EVENING.

THE HISTORY AND METAMORPHOSES OF THE FLAX-SEED.

THE fairy, seated upon her throne, was attired in a robe trimmed with fruit and flowers, her azure mantle was thickly spangled with stars, while upon her head rested a sun whose rays, formed of rubies, emeralds and diamonds, glowed like fire.

At the foot of her throne, Flax-seed, Cherry-stone, and Brilliant, stood patiently awaiting their sovereign's bidding.

With an air of mingled majesty and gentleness, Nature signed to the first-named of her servants to approach her footstool.

'Flax-seed,' she said, 'it is now many years since I first gave you life; let us hear how you have employed your time, and whether you have profited by all the kindness I shewed you—tell me all the good and all the evil you have done. I shall listen attentively to your tale.'

Flax-seed, in a modest and gentle tone, promptly obeyed her sovereign's commands, and thus began her history:—

'My mother, when I was as yet only a little grain, I was planted in the earth by your orders, and, thanks to your care, my every want was there supplied.

'At the end of a few days, two pretty little green wings sprung forth from me; I raised my head above the ground, and saw the light of day. There, your providential goodness still cared for my wants—the dews of heaven refreshed me, and the warm beams

of the sun lent vigour to my frame—each day I grew taller, my little wings expanded into verdant branches, my tall and slender stem, adorned with leaves of beautiful form, waved gracefully in the breeze—soon its summit was crowned with lovely little flowers, of as bright a blue as the canopy of heaven itself, and I became proud of my beauty. It is true, my mother, that I was not vain without reason ; for I may tell you, as this beauty was one of your gifts, that I was very lovely ! I heard myself praised continually, until I began to forget that it was you who had made me beautiful, and I became vain and foolish. I was continually gazing at my own reflection in the running brook, I admired myself more than I did all my companions put together, and I thought that my beauty was never destined to fade or pass away. In the mean time, spring had given place to summer, my bloom and freshness were rapidly passing away, and I would not open my eyes to perceive it. The melancholy truth was whispered around me on all sides, but I could not believe it. I thought it was only jealousy which made my companions speak of me thus unkindly. At length, however, the fatal moment arrived when I could no longer doubt my misfortune, my blue petals drooped and withered. I wept and I murmured against you, my mother : pardon me for this ; I was then very ignorant, and I was yet *so young*.’

‘Poor Flax-seed,’ said the fairy gently, ‘go on with your story.’

‘Then it was, my mother, for the first time, that I thought of what you said to me when you created me : “*Try to be of some use,*” and I consoled myself for the loss of my beauty, when I saw my flower replaced by a little seed which was carefully gathered by enchanters. I then learnt that I could do, some good, and I rejoiced. *One* changed this seed into oil, *another* into medicine, and I felt less regret for the

loss of my charms, when I heard man bless me for my benefits.'

'At last I grew old, quite old, and I thought that my career was drawing to a close; a gentle voice however whispered in my ear, 'Little Flax-seed learn *trust and resignation.*' I now think, my mother, that it was your voice which spoke to me. For you know what you expected from me, and if you were preparing new sorrows for me, it was doubtless only to prove me, and to fit me for higher ends.'

The fairy smiled, and Flax-seed continued—

'This was the most trying period of my life. I was vegetating sadly enough in the soil, when, one fine day, the farmer of the land which had given me birth, suddenly uprooted me from the ground, together with my companions. He laid us side by side in a stream; then I murmured bitterly: "See," said I to my sisters, "are not these men ungrateful! for their sakes we adorned ourselves with flowers pleasant to the sight, our pressed seeds have furnished them with oil; our seeds ground in the mill produces a meal which helps to alleviate their sufferings, and after all they reward us by tearing us up like a useless plant, and treating us as though we were mere rubbish. It would have been better for my mother to have allowed me to remain a little unnoticed seed, than to have exposed me to this humiliation." But while I thus spoke, the voice continually repeated in my ear, in a tone of gentle reproof, "*trust and resignation.*" We were left in the waters of the stream during all the heat of the dog-days. This was called *rotting the flax*. During this period, my existence was not destitute of charm, but my pride was wounded by the contempt with which I had been treated from the moment I had lost my youth and beauty. One day the farmer who had placed us in our present position, came to seek us; we were laid out in the sun to

dry, and then carried to the farm—there, during the long winter evenings, we were passed from hand to hand, amongst a group of joyous young girls, who, whilst they chatted and sung, broke our stems into small pieces, and separated the inside stringy pith from the dead wood, this they called *peeling the flax*.

‘The dead wood was then tied together in little bundles of equal length, the ends of which were dipped in sulphur, in order to make matches, and I was quite proud of being able thus to help in producing light. This was not all, however, there was yet another process to be undergone: the stringy fibre, which had been so carefully removed, was next combed with large steel combs in order to extract from it any little pieces of wood which might be still adhering to it. After this it soon took its place upon the distaff of the aged grandmother, or that of the youthful shepherdess; both sung while they plied the distaff, and beneath their nimble fingers I quickly became transformed into the finest thread—so fine that every one wished to buy it.



‘ One enchanter, who paid a very high price for me, metamorphosed me into the finest lace ; another enchanter, named Weaver, stretched me upon his loom, and, thanks to his art, I became fine cambric, and, under these new forms, I was proud to find myself deemed worthy of being included in the wedding garments of a princess, fair and good, my mother, like yourself. I then looked back upon my past life, and I felt thankful for all the trials I had experienced, since they had been the means of leading me onwards to the happy state I now enjoyed.

‘ In the position I now filled, my life was a happy one. There was nothing laborious in the service I was called to fulfil : I completed the toilet of the princess. Being myself adorned with the most exquisite embroidery, which shewed to yet greater advantage the extreme delicacy of my texture, I received my full share of the meed of admiration which was justly bestowed upon my mistress. The greatest care was taken of me. I slept in a rosewood case, inlaid with gold and mother of pearl, lined with satin, and fragrant with the most costly perfumes. In short, I was happy, too happy perhaps, for I soon forgot the lessons which experience had already taught me.

‘ Puffed up by my small degree of merit, attributing all the favour I enjoyed to my own good qualities, and forgetting that, under you, I owed every thing to the enchanter who had bestowed upon me my present form, I thought it impossible that I could ever again change ; but, once more, I began to grow old. From the wardrobe of the princess I was transferred to that of one of her attendants ; until, at last, I became a rag ! Then I once more cursed my very existence :—“ It was indeed well worth while,” I exclaimed, “ to pass through so many vicissitudes in order to arrive at length at such a miserable result as this !” Do not look displeased at me, kind mother ;

I am sure you must own that there was enough in such a fate as that I then experienced to shake the trust of a poor ignorant creature like myself.'

'Flax-seed,' replied the fairy, in a grave tone, 'were not my past favours a sufficient pledge to you of my future goodness?'

'That is indeed true, my mother,' replied Flax-seed, overwhelmed with confusion, 'but it is right I should tell you all, and you must forgive my folly and my weakness.' While I thus fancied myself cast aside as useless, I was one day conveyed to an hospital; there, kind and charitable women cut me into long strips, which were laid ready for use in a pile which looked soft and white as the driven snow. O my mother, in that asylum of suffering and of misery, how many virtues I saw displayed of which



the world is ignorant ! What goodness, what self-devotion I witnessed ! There I saw women consecrating their whole lives to the service of the sick—watching night and day to relieve their sufferings, finding in prayer their only consolation, and seeking for no earthly reward beyond the blessing of the miserable and the dying by whom they were surrounded. When I saw the patience and the tender gentleness of these devoted women, I longed to imitate their virtues, and the happiest moment of my existence was that in which I first shared in the blessings bestowed by the poor sufferers on those who gently applied me to their wounds, and bound me closely around their suffering limbs. Oh, this *was* indeed a happy moment ! it rewarded me for all my past trials, and I felt it was better to be used as a healing bandage, than to be transformed into sumptuous cambric or costly lace.

‘I was not, however, yet so entirely corrected of my faults as to be inaccessible to the temptations of pride, and you now sent me a new lesson—rather a severe one it is true—but this time it was not lost upon me. I was at last cast out of the hospital, and thrown upon the road side ; a wretched rag-man picked me up from thence, and placed me in a bag in company with all sorts of horrible rags, of every colour and description. This was indeed to me a bitter humiliation ; but this time I considered it as a just punishment inflicted upon me on account of the readiness with which I continually fell over and over again into the same faults. I therefore submitted patiently to the correction, and the gentle voice once more whispered in my ear,—“*trust and resignation.*”

‘In the course of a few days I was sold, together with my new companions. As I was white and of delicate texture, I was quickly separated from the rest by my master’s hand, and placed apart in com-

pany with other individuals of the same species. Another severe trial here awaited me, but I may say that I passed through it in a manner which redounded to my honour.

‘ We were piled one at top of another in a damp and infectious hole, the purpose of which is sufficiently indicated by its name, the *retting-vat* ; here we were allowed to remain until one day when a new enchanter pronounced us to be in a fit state to serve his purposes. My companions murmured, but I had now learnt to reflect more deeply, and I waited patiently, fully confiding this time in the goodness of my mother, who had never yet forsaken me.

It was, therefore, without a murmur—for I felt assured that it was for my good—that I found myself, together with my companions, now torn to shreds by iron teeth, which were kept in perpetual motion by the wheels of a mill. Other contrivances soon reduced us to pulp, and this pulp, having been collected in large vats, and afterwards spread upon open frames which allowed the water to flow off, was then dried, either by the action of fire, or a current of fresh air, in a large apartment called the *drying-room*. This operation transformed the pulp into fine, white, satin-weve paper.

‘ All the homage I had ever received during the whole course of my long career was nothing in comparison of that which awaited me after this metamorphosis. Every one seemed to vie with his neighbour in anxiety to obtain possession of me. A young man employed me to convey tidings of his welfare to his absent mother ; a grave magistrate inscribed upon my leaves a wise law for the better regulation of affairs of state ; a physician wrote upon them a prescription which restored health to the sick ; a poet traced upon them some harmonious verses ; a painter sketched upon them the portraits of the great and good ; and finally, an author, who

loved children, took possession of me, and noted down on my glossy pages a history of my own adventures, for the instruction and amusement of a dear little girl named Lucilla.

‘This, my mother, is the history of my life : I have not always been as good and useful as I ought to be, but I hope that the small portion of good I have done will obtain favour in your eyes ; that you will pardon my errors and my weakness ; and I desire, if you have no objection, to be allowed to retain my present form.’

‘We shall see, we shall see,’ replied the fairy ; ‘but before I decide on anything, I wish first to hear what you all three have to say. Approach, therefore, *Cherry-stone*, and tell me in your turn what use you have made of the life I bestowed upon you ?’

Cherry-stone rose, respectfully saluted the fairy, and . . . to-morrow you shall hear the history of his adventures.

LUCILLA.—‘Thank you, dear mamma, for your pretty tale.’

MOTHER.—‘Say rather my history, for all the changes and all the misfortunes of Flax-seed have really happened as I have now related them.’

LUCILLA.—‘What ! this little seed of flax that I had in my hand just now, may become first a pretty plant, then fine thread, cambric, lint, and even paper at last ?’

MOTHER.—‘Yes, my love : at the command of the great Being who creates all these wonders, the little seed bursts forth from the ground with its tiny green wings, which quickly expand into stems and leaves ; these stems are soon adorned with pretty blue flowers ; the flowers pass away ; but ere long the seed is formed, and shortly afterwards the plant, scorched by the sun, only presents the appearance of a piece of dried and withered wood ; then comes

man, the lesser enchanter, he cuts it down and extracts from it oil and meal, whilst he converts its fibres into thread. This thread, beneath his industrious hands, is wrought into linen, cambric, or lace, and finally is turned into paper.'

LUCILLA.—'Oh, mamma, how wonderful all this is! do pray take care of this little flax-seed and keep it for me till to-morrow, that I may put it into the ground, and follow it through all its changes? I will take great care of it, and if it ever complains, I will encourage it by saying, as the fairy used to say, "*trust and resignation.*" All that is happening to thee is only for thy good; thou must suffer before thou canst be of any real use in the world.'

MOTHER.—'True, my child; but I would have you remember this lesson for your own benefit, as well as for that of the flax-seed, for you have yourself also been like this tiny seed. Now, you are but a little flower, sometimes, I fear, like the one we have been speaking of, disposed to be vain, and sometimes murmuring at things which are intended for your good.

'And yet these lessons, this good advice, these little disappointments, which now sometimes vex and weary you, are meant to make you each day more fit to fulfil all the after duties of life. Believe me, my child, if we now seek to profit by our trials, whether they be small or great, we shall one day look back upon them as thankfully as did little Flax-seed, and say to others, as she has this day said to us,—"*Learn in all things trust and resignation.*"'

THIRD EVENING.

It was now Cherry-stone's turn to relate the history of his life ; and he thus began :—

‘You must pardon me, my mother, if in recounting my adventures I should ever appear to praise myself ; I have now learnt to feel that whatever good thing I may have done in my life, it was you who inspired me to do it. My only merit has been that I listened to your voice.

‘After you had deposited me in the earth, I put forth, like Flax-seed, two little green wings, which quickly forced their way upwards. Scarcely had I shown my head above ground, when a sweet little girl perceived me, and clapping her hands with delight, transplanted me, together with the soil which surrounded me, into a beautiful porcelain vase, where I soon became the object of her tenderest care.

‘Clara, (this was the name of my pretty little mistress,) examined me at least twenty times in the course of the day, to see whether I was growing or not. She sheltered me from the sun, screened me from the cold north wind, watered me indefatigably, perhaps *too much* ; but, in short, thanks to her cares, and in spite of their excess, I gradually became more fully developed.

‘Two months passed away in this manner, and I was yet but like a little blade, when Clara one day set out for the country, and took me with her ; she loved me so well that she inquired particularly what steps she ought to take in order to complete my educa-

tion. The enchanter whom she consulted said,—“Confide your little favourite to my care, and I promise you that ere long the little blade shall be transformed into a tree, which will bear, not only lovely flowers, but bright, ruby-coloured fruit.” Clara was delighted at the thought of this, but yet she could scarcely make up her mind to part from me. I must own, however, that I was delighted when she at last consented to entrust me to the enchanter’s care. I was wearied of vegetating in a small flower-pot, on a window stool, I longed to find myself in the midst of a forest, and able, like my fellows, to brave the wintry storm. The town life I now led with Clara appeared to me pitiful and dull, and I quitted my kind benefactress without a single pang of regret ;—a piece of ingratitude for which I reproach myself even to this day.

‘The enchanter had placed me among a number of young plants, of the same species as myself, and I had not to complain of experiencing any diminution of care or attention in my new position. It is true I was no longer fondled in the manner I was accustomed to be by Clara, but the care I now received was of a far more judicious character. My little mistress used to look at me every minute to see whether I was growing ; she would stir the earth about me until she almost laid bare my roots ; or else she would deluge me with filtered water, which imparted neither nourishment or vigour. My new master, on the contrary, knew exactly what degree of heat and moisture I required, and distributed them with a careful hand.

‘I now began rapidly to increase in size. Clara had left me a little nursling. I soon became a shrub, then a tree ! How proud I was of my tall, graceful form, and of my glossy bark, which distilled from its pores drops of amber ! But I was yet more proud when my head was crowned with flowers, and I

longed for Clara to return, that I might enjoy the surprise and delight she would experience on seeing me. At length she arrived ; it was the season of early spring ; the sky was clear and bright ; the trees, clad in verdant foliage, were putting forth their blossoms, and I was decked with clusters of snow-white flowers tinged with the most delicate rose-colour. Clara almost screamed with joy when she recognized me. She called me her dear tree, she clasped her arms around my stem, and measured her height with mine ; but I was taller than she was—her little head covered with auburn locks scarcely reached my lowest cluster of flowers : she hid her face laughingly amongst them, and I covered her with a shower of snowy petals.

‘ Clara thanked the enchanter for the care he had taken of me, and said she wished me to be transplanted into her father’s park. “ Not this year,” said he, “ his education is not yet completed : as yet he is only beautiful, he must also become useful ; he now bears flowers alone, he must also produce fruit ; wait yet a little while.”

‘ Clara yielded to his wishes ; but as for me I taxed my master with caprice, for I thought it impossible to become more perfect than I was already ; and I must own, though I am half ashamed to do so, that *ennui* was beginning to take possession of me ; I felt myself lost in the midst of the enchanter’s nursery garden, and I longed to become the ornament of a beautiful park. I was obliged, however, to resign myself to my fate.

‘ When the spring was over my flowers began to fall, and were replaced by small fruit, green at first, but afterwards assuming a bright ruby hue. I gloried in this new ornament, and regretted that Clara could not see me in my splendour. But one day, a day which yet rises sadly on my remembrance, I saw the enchanter coming to me, armed with a

sharp instrument. Notwithstanding my lamentations, he caused my branches to fall one after another. "Cruel, wretch!" I exclaimed, "what harm have I ever done to you that you should inflict upon me this terrible suffering, and strip me of these beautiful boughs in which I gloried?" He scarcely seemed, however, even to listen to my words. Oh, I must own that I then murmured against you, my mother, who, after having bestowed upon me the gift of life, thus delivered me up to be the apparent victim of a wicked man's fury. In my distress I cried aloud to you for assistance, and the enchanter then said to me, in a tone gentler than I could have expected, "Child, thou must learn to submit; what I am now doing is for thy good, and is permitted by thy mother. This morning thou wert only a wild young plant; now, thanks to my grafting, thou wilt become a fair



and fruitful tree ; only trust me, I know better than thou dost what is good for thee. Up to this day I have tended thee in thy youth, I have watered thee in time of drought, I have freed thee from the pernicious insects which stripped thee of thy foliage. Thinkest thou, then, that I would do ought to injure thee ? This graft will render thee fruitful, it will impart flavour and sweetness to thy now wild and acid fruit ; in short, hitherto thou hast been but pleasant to the sight, now thou shalt also become good for food—yield, then, a willing obedience to my commands.”

‘I bowed my head, and was silent. I felt I must obey, and yet, I own, I was not convinced. The enchanter made a slight incision in my bark, inserted in it a little branch taken from a cherry tree in the garden, then bound it up, surrounding it with earth and straw, and thus, during the whole remainder of the season, I presented an unsightly, mournful and suffering appearance, and, having but little faith in the enchanter’s promises, I could not help viewing with an envious eye all the more favoured trees by which I was surrounded.

‘At last, however, spring once more came round. With surprise I perceived that flowers again crowned my summit, and leaves burst forth in luxuriant abundance. Then, as the enchanter had predicted, fruits, larger and sweeter than any I had before borne, soon began to form and to ripen beneath this verdant shelter. No long period was suffered to elapse before Clara again made her appearance ; and oh, how happy I was at being permitted to offer my first-fruits to my youthful mistress ! I gratefully thanked him for this hour of triumph to myself and of delight to Clara.

‘It was a bright day in my existence, that on which I was gently uprooted, under Clara’s anxious supervision, and carefully transported to a distance

from my native soil. My new home was on the sea-coast, in the bright and sunny land of Provence, where Clara now lived. In this delightful climate, my mother, your great enemy, Frost, has but little power: the skies are bluer, and the breezes softer and more genial than in the more northern clime from which I had been transplanted. There the orange tree is seen, laden with its golden fruit,—there grows the olive, the pomegranate, and the oleander.—Oh, it is a lovely country, this fair Provence!

‘I was planted in one of the most picturesque sites of the park, commanding a view of the sea; and a young vine, which was placed by my side, entwined its tendrils among my branches, so that we formed a little arbour, beneath which Clara often sat to watch the setting sun, or find a shelter from its noontide rays. In spring she used to delight in seeing the cloud of snow-white petals which I showered upon her auburn locks. But when the fruit season came, then did I bear a part in yet more joyous scenes. Clara, surrounded by a group of young companions as joyous as herself, would gather my bright ruby fruit, or shake it from my boughs. It was a pleasure to me to distribute my favours amongst this merry band. But how few of these children resembled Clara!—Many of them, not content with accepting the fruit which I so readily bestowed, also broke the bough which bore it, forgetting that they thus destroyed my promise for another year,—that the bough, once broken, would not live again!

‘Clara’s chief companion, however, was a brother, named Oliver, as good and gentle as herself, who appeared to love her tenderly. It was always he who climbed my branches to gather the topmost fruit; but he did it carefully, for he would not for worlds injure Clara’s cherry-tree. He covered me



with a net to guard my sweet and ruddy fruit from the pilfering of the birds ; dug up the soil around me, in order to allow the water to penetrate to my roots, and surrounded me with prickly branches, to prevent the goats from robbing me of my bark ; in short, his care for me was unceasing.

‘ Already, during sixteen successive years, I had presented my benefactors with lovely flowers in spring, and supplied them with shade and with refreshing fruit during the summer heats. Clara was no longer a child, but a fair young girl, while her brother, who was four years older than herself, seemed to me to have already passed from youth to manhood. They often sat together, reading and

conversing beneath my shade, and I each day learned to admire them more and more.

“One day, as Clara was seated at work in the arbour formed by my branches, Oliver approached and seated himself by her side. He looked pale and sad, and I soon learned from his conversation that he was the bearer of evil tidings. He informed Clara that their father was a bankrupt, and that having together investigated the state of their affairs, they had come to the conclusion that, bitter as the trial of a separation would be to them all, it was the only step which could afford them a chance of retrieving their fortunes. He and his father had therefore decided on proceeding without delay to America, while Clara and their mother were to retire to a quiet village in the neighbourhood.

‘Clara’s grief was at first overwhelming: the thought of parting from her beloved father and brother—of leaving the happy home where they had passed together the bright and joyous years of early youth,—all conspired to fill her young heart with sorrow. But Oliver did all he could to console her. He told her that she must now bear her part in comforting their beloved mother, whose grief was yet greater than her own; that this trial had not fallen upon them through any fault of their own, but was an appointment of God’s providence; and that, in following the path of duty, they might confidently look for his blessing, and trust to his goodness to re-unite them all together once more, even on earth.

‘The weeping Clara embraced her brother, and said, “Yes, my beloved Oliver, I shall indeed try to be a comfort to my poor mother—even as you will be, I trust, our father’s support and stay. Night and day we shall pray for your welfare. If it please God to prosper your endeavours, and allow you both to return to us, we may all yet be happy together; and

if not—even should poverty and separation be our lot for many years to come—yet, in the path of duty, we cannot fail to be happy, or at least contented and peaceful.”

‘ Thus did these two young people seek to strengthen one another in the hour of trial, and encourage one another to learn the lesson of trust and resignation which adversity was meant to teach.

‘ But even at this sad moment they did not forget the favourite tree of their childhood—they each cut the other’s name upon my bark, and Clara, plucking a cluster of delicate blossoms from my lowest bough, gave them to her brother.

‘ In the course of a few days, the two gentlemen took their departure for America, and shortly afterwards, the beautiful park which had witnessed so many happy days, passed into the hands of a new master. Clara, before leaving her home, came to take a last look at me, and throwing her arms around my stem, kissed me as she had sometimes done in the days of her childhood, and told me to keep Oliver’s name safely on my bark, and not allow it to be obliterated. From the time of the dispersion of my friends, I became sad and even morose. The seasons appeared to me less beautiful than of old ; when decked with flowers, I felt a pang at the thought that Clara was not there to admire them, and it was with yet more regret that I yielded my fruit for the benefit of the new proprietors. In order to deprive them of it, I called together the birds, the bees, and the ants, and invited them to partake of my dainties ; they needed no second trial, but hastened to devour the finest fruit, leaving only the refuse for the use of the masters. I own I could not help rejoicing at all this—an inward monitor told me it was wrong, but I silenced its remonstrances by the question, “ Is not this the heritage of Clara and of Oliver ? ”

‘ I often thought of the heroic spirit these two young people had shown on the eve of their separation. Then my mother, I thought of you, and of how little good I had done in the course of my life. And yet your voice seemed to be continually sounding in my ears, “ Do good, and be of use to others ; every created thing was placed upon earth for this end,—shame upon those who forget to do good—woe to those who only remember to do evil.” “ But how,” I asked, “ am I to do good in my position ? for no choice is allowed me.”

“ How art thou to do good ?” your voice, my mother, gently whispered in reply, “ by learning to submit to thy destiny without a murmur ; for instance, to-day, instead of yielding shade and fruit to thy new masters with regret, do it with a willing and cheerful heart ; it is pleasant to give to those we love, but for this we deserve no thanks : virtue consists in giving willingly to those to whom we are indifferent, or whom we dislike. Let not Clara’s example be thrown away upon thee,—for thou must one day render an account of this and every advantage thou hast enjoyed.” From this day forward, I tried in good earnest to do what was right, and thanks to you, my mother, who were always ready to help me, I did as much good as my stationary position would admit of.

‘ Six years had passed away from the time of Oliver’s departure, when he once more stood before me ; his complexion was sun-burnt, and his aspect was graver and more sedate than when I had last seen him ; but his heart was unchanged. He embraced me as if I had been an old friend, looked to see whether I had retained Clara’s name and his own engraven upon my bark, gathered some of my fruit which lay scattered upon the ground, and said in a cheerful tone, “ Farewell, beloved tree, I hope that thy next spring flowers will be gathered, and

thy next summer's fruit enjoyed by thy former mistress."

"My whole being thrilled with pleasure as I thought of once more seeing my early friends, and witnessing their well-earned happiness.

"We were now in the most stormy season of the year, and I had often much to suffer from the fury of the winds, for I was no longer as carefully tended as in former times. One day, after I had been most pitilessly shaken by the tempest, and had exerted myself to the utmost to resist its fury, towards evening, a violent thunder-storm arose, and a relentless bolt struck me to the ground. "O my mother," I exclaimed, "I would fain have been suffered to exist at least until the spring; but I bow to your will—this is the only good thing which I am now capable of doing." Thus saying, I bowed my head, and my beautiful and numerous branches were in a moment strewed upon the ground. Next day I was sold—one portion of my shattered trunk was purchased by a cabinet-maker, while my roots were piled up in a wood yard.

"I soon perceived that I had only undergone a change of form. The cabinet-maker fashioned me into an endless variety of pretty and useful articles. I assumed the form of a work-table, a writing-desk, a casket. Some months had passed away: my new master had sold both the casket and the work-box which he had made out of my wood, and my beauty had been praised by many, when one day, to my unspeakable delight, Clara's father entered the shop, and inquired from my master whether it were true that he had purchased the wood of the cherry-tree which had been struck by lightning the preceding year. The cabinet-maker replied in the affirmative, and pointed out the work-table and writing-desk which still remained in his possession.

"Oh!" replied the kind father of my early friends,

“those are exactly what will suit my purpose. This tree was a great favourite with my son and daughter in their childhood, and I heard them express a wish the other day that they could obtain some relic of the old tree. You may send that work-table and writing-desk home to my house to-night.”

‘I cannot describe the delight I experienced when evening came, and I was carried through the well-known park where I had passed so many happy years, and, on being ushered into the drawing-room, saw once more the familiar faces of Clara and Oliver, who bestowed upon me a cordial greeting, and spoke with grateful pleasure of all the happy hours they had passed beneath my shade. And now my eventful history is concluded ;—from that memorable day forward, I have remained a welcome inmate in the recovered home of my early friends. I am still their favourite companion, both in their hours of pleasure and of business ; and I would now ask you, my mother, to bestow upon me the same favour which Flax-seed has already solicited at your hands : allow me to retain my present form, at least so long as Clara and Oliver are alive.’

‘Cherry-stone,’ replied the Fairy, ‘your narration has deeply touched me, and I shall soon reply to your request ; but we must first hear what Brilliant has to say—he ought also to have many interesting things to tell us.’

LUCILLA.—‘Oh, mamma, how I do like the story of that good Cherry-stone ! Will you let me be like Clara and plant a cherry-tree ? I will put one into the ground to-morrow if I only may !’

MOTHER.—‘You certainly may plant a cherry-stone, my love ; but remember that, in order to be like Clara, you must do something more than plant and rear a tree. You must, like her, be unselfish, dutiful to your parents, and kind to all around you.’

LUCILLA.—‘I promise you, dear mamma, that I

will do all I can to be like her. But tell me, *must* my cherry-tree be grafted before it will bear good fruit? I do not like the idea of my poor tree being cut, and made to look ugly for so long a time.'

MOTHER.—'Yes, my child, it must be so. It is the law of nature, and of God's providence, that nothing worth doing or having can be achieved without labour, and perhaps suffering. You, my dear Lucilla, are now yourself like the young wild cherry-tree, and many years of steady, and perchance, sometimes, of chastening discipline, may lie before you, ere you can become, what I trust one day to see you, an amiable and cultivated woman. Remember, therefore, the cherry-tree, whenever you are disposed to find your studies wearisome, or to murmur at any little restrictions which may be imposed on you. Try to grow, like it, each day, in "whatever is lovely and of good report," and you will then become, in maturer years, a source of joy and happiness to many, and feel very thankful to God and to your parents that you were trained and nurtured like the little cherry-tree!'

LUCILLA.—'Well, mamma, I never should have thought that a tree could give one so many lessons.'

MOTHER.—'All nature has a voice, my child; and we should learn far more than we do had we an ear and a heart ever open to receive its teachings.'

FOURTH EVENING.

IT now came to Brilliant's turn to relate his history, and, casting around him a proud and disdainful glance, he approached the Fairy, and thus addressed her,—

‘If you expect, my mother, that *I* am about to draw a moral from my adventures, even as Flaxseed and Cherry-stone have done from theirs, you will be sadly disappointed ; but if you can find pleasure in details of splendour and of greatness, then, I doubt not, I shall be able to satisfy you that I have more than fulfilled your commands.

‘It must be owned that I was but an insignificant creature when first I came forth from your hands. You had buried me in the earth, not far from a mine of black coal, and the scientific men of the day, my most bitter foes, even venture to affirm that I am composed of the same materials as that contemptible substance, which is employed for the most commonplace purposes, and which supplies the most vulgar needs of humanity.

‘If this *be* the case, so much the more proud do I feel of having known how to raise myself to a post so superior in rank and dignity. But, in truth, it is too ridiculous to suppose that there is anything at all in common between my nature and that of this ugly coal.’

The fairy at first gravely shook her head, and then a smile of mingled pity and severity for a moment curled her lip.

Brilliant perceived it, and thus continued :—‘This much, at least, all must allow : that if the coal and I *have*, as it is said, a common origin, I have at all

events had the merit of shedding a lustre around my lowly birth.

‘I felt an eager longing to quit the gloomy abode where I had pined away my existence for so many years. In the impatience of my heart, I looked with envious eyes upon those piles of coal, which were daily torn from the bowels of the earth and transported to the surface; and yet to what end were they transported thither?—perhaps to light a fire, and cook a dinner: a *noble* destiny, indeed! Such was not the existence I had shaped out in my own imagination for myself. I desired to become illustrious,—to cut a figure in the world. I do not wish to reproach you, my mother; but you certainly allowed me to remain a very long time forgotten in my very gloomy cradle; and there I might have remained to this day, had not a poor man discovered me by the merest accident, and released me from my imprisonment.

‘This man’s name was Hassan. He was the father of a large family, and his daily labour was barely sufficient to procure for them the necessaries of life. His heart bounded with joy when he first discovered me, and, though it was contrary to the laws of the land to conceal a diamond from the owner of the ground beneath which it was discovered, he determined to conceal me carefully from every eye, and seize the first opportunity of escaping with me. He was well aware that I was worth more than enough to make the fortune of the most ambitious man, could he but once transport me to some spot where he might venture with safety to offer me for sale.

‘We were both filled with joy when we first felt ourselves at liberty to breathe the free air of heaven; and this, my first day passed upon the surface of the earth, was one of unmingled happiness. My newly-acquired master continually drew me forth from his

bosom, and gazed upon me with transport, while he praised my brilliancy, and rejoiced in my inestimable value. These praises were as music to my ears, and I felt each hour prouder of my beauty.

‘ When Hassan had passed some time in admiring me to his heart’s content,—neglecting in the meantime the daily labour which had hitherto enabled him to support his numerous family,—they began urgently to call upon him for their daily food. It was all in vain for him to tell them,—“ We are rich now—we are very rich !” They still wanted *food*; and even *my* beauty, resplendent though it was, did not seem by any means to still the cravings of the vulgar appetite of hunger. Hassan, driven to despair, at last determined to fly the country, and leaving his family to struggle on for a time as well as they could, to seek to dispose in some foreign land of the jewel which he was forced to conceal while he remained at home. He accordingly secreted me carefully about his person, and escaping by night from his native place, made his way to a sea-port town, where he found a ship sailing for Borneo. He lost no time in securing a passage for that island, and a favouring wind sped the good vessel swiftly on its course.

‘ We had made considerable progress in our voyage, when, one day, a strange sail appeared in sight, which was soon discovered to be a corsair. The battle which ensued was long and terrible. It was indeed a fearful sight to see the two ships, buffeted by the waves, alternately approaching towards and retreating from each other, while the incessant firing, the shouts of defiance, and the yells of triumph, were enough to appal the stoutest heart.

‘ At length, however, victory decided in favour of the corsair; and Hassan, together with all the survivors among the crew, were put in chains, and reserved by the pirates to be sold into slavery as

soon as they reached the destined port. The corsair discovered me in my place of concealment, and, enchanted with his good fortune, at once took possession of the prize.

‘A change of masters was to me a matter of but small moment. I felt no attachment towards the one I had lost, and rather rejoiced in the new prospects which now opened before me.

‘The corsair knew that my possession secured to him an ample fortune ; he therefore determined upon renouncing the profession he had hitherto followed, and resolved to wander through every quarter of the globe, and to visit every coast, until he should succeed in finding a purchaser willing to pay the price at which he justly valued me. When we reached Brazil, my new master went to visit the diamond mines which exist in that country, but he saw no brilliants which were at all comparable to me in value.

‘There I was enabled to judge of the vast importance which men attach to our possession. No one is allowed to approach within several miles of the district where the diamond mines are situated, without incurring the heaviest penalties. The government of Portugal, to which they belong, watches most jealously against any attempt to defraud them of their rights.

‘It employs in these diamond mines a body of negro slaves, under the rigid superintendence of inspectors, who watch their every movement, and keep them in perpetual terror by means of the whip.

‘As soon as a negro has found a diamond, he is bound, under pain of the severest chastisement, to give notice of his discovery, and to place the valued gem at once in the hands of the inspector of the works. This inspector places it in a vase appointed for the purpose, and a superior officer each evening inspects this case, counting out and weighing the diamonds,

which are then classed according to their respective value.

‘Notwithstanding all these precautions, however, many robberies are committed. My master purchased a diamond from a poor negro, who had escaped from the mines in terror of his life, and, after undergoing the most dreadful hardships in the attempt to conceal his ill-gotten prize, was only too thankful to give up his diamond in return for my master’s promise of getting him conveyed in safety to his native shores. My master soon embarked, together with his new acquisition and myself, in a vessel bound for Portugal; but finding that he was not likely to receive my full value at this court, did not expose me to the public gaze, and ere long quitted Portugal for France.

‘In France we found the place to which I might have aspired, occupied by two brilliants of very inferior size, and far from equalling me in value in any respect, though *they* were presumptuous enough to deem otherwise. The first was named the Sancy Diamond; which was indebted for its magic brilliancy to an enchanter named Louis de Berghem, who, by rubbing it with diamond dust, had polished and shaped it so beautifully, that had it been possible for me to feel jealous of such a pigmy, my jealousy would certainly have been excited.

‘This Sancy Diamond used to relate his adventures with the most ludicrous air of self-importance; and certainly they were rather singular.

‘He boasted of having belonged to Charles the Bold, the famous Duke of Burgundy, who lost him at the time he was defeated by the Swiss army, at Granson. Found on the field of battle by a poor shepherd, Sancy was exchanged for a few shillings, and, after having passed through several hands, was sold for a large sum to the Baron de Sancy, ambassador at Constantinople, from whom it

received its name. It was worth while to hear Sancy describe, in such glowing terms, the great deeds of his noble master, who, he informed us, had twice pledged him to the Jews of Metz ; once, in order to procure money to lend to Henry III., to enable him to pay the Swiss soldiers who had fought in his service ; and on a second occasion, to obtain for Henry IV. a sum of money he required to procure food for the inhabitants of Paris.

‘Poor Sancy used to relate all this with a degree of emotion that was perfectly ludicrous. He seemed to consider his master a hero of patriotism and of disinterestedness, because he had thus been ready to sacrifice his fortune in the service of his king and country, and he was proud of having shared the glory of such an action. I cannot say that I felt at all anxious to dispute with him such glory as *this—very* different were the triumphs to which I aspired ; and I soon succeeded in attaining the utmost extent of my hopes.

‘By the side of Sancy there shone at the Court of France another diamond, equally proud of its lustre, and equally contemptible in its pretensions when compared with myself. It bore the name of the “Regent ;” the Duke of Orleans, when Regent of France, having purchased it for the enormous sum of two million two hundred thousand francs, although it only weighed one hundred and thirty-six carats, while my weight was *three hundred and sixty-six !*

‘My splendour was, however, but little appreciated at the French court, and I was maliciously advised to have recourse to the enchanter, who could impart to me an artificial lustre ; but I was not of a nature likely to submit to such slavery, and I firmly rejected this insulting council. The “Regent” diamond had been, I might almost say, a fellow-countryman of mine ; the mines of Golconda,

the richest this earth possesses, had given him birth.

‘This mine had been discovered by accident. A poor shepherd, chancing to stumble against a stone, stooped down, and, picking it up, found that it shone brightly; but was so little aware of its value, that he sold it for a small quantity of rice.

‘Regent gave us an account of the way in which the diamond mines, in which he was born, are worked.

‘There, thousands of workmen are incessantly employed. With a kind of iron hoop, they scrape together the sand and gravel in which the stones are found. This sand, is thrown into troughs, through which a stream of water is conducted. When it has been sufficiently washed to clear it from the earth which mingles with it, it is passed through a dozen sieves, the holes in each successive sieve being smaller than in the preceding one. The larger diamonds remain in the topmost sieve, the smaller ones in the lowest; and when they have thus been divided into twelve separate classes, they are all weighed and valued.

‘We quitted France, which had proved itself so ignorant of my true value, and passed into Russia, imagining that in this vast empire, at least, a place worthy of being occupied by so illustrious a brilliant as myself might at length be found. But here, too, I had been forestalled by an inferior stone, which, in my estimation, bore considerable resemblance to a pigeon’s egg, and had once been so far degraded as to form the eye of a Hindoo idol, from which singular post it was carried away by a French grenadier, who, with this view, had contrived to be one of the priests of the idol. We accordingly abandoned this pitiful Europe, where my merits had been so signally overlooked, and determined to seek, in the more wealthy and gorgeous Asiatic courts, a sovereign worthy of possessing me.

‘Having reached the kingdom of Lahore, I was shewn, in the treasure chamber of the Prince Runjeet Singh, the famous *Koh-i-noor*, or Mountain of Light, which has since been placed, by the fortune of war, in the hand of England’s Queen, and now forms an ornament of the Crystal Palace. I was this time forced to own that I had met with a rival worthy to compete with me. It was indeed a brilliant of the first water, pure and transparent as a limpid stream. It was nearly as large as an egg cut through the middle, and shone with such transcendent lustre, that it might well be called the Mountain of Light ! Runjeet Singh and my master could not come to terms together, and I rejoiced at such being the case, for I should have been miserable had I been forced to live with *Koh-i-noor*, and share with him the admiration of the court. Proud as I was of having thus measured my beauty with that of the most celebrated diamonds the world contains, I still felt a pang of regret at the thought that I had not yet met with one sovereign capable of appreciating me, or wealthy enough to purchase me ; and I was beginning to get weary of the idle life I was leading, when it so happened that, my fame having reached the ears of the great Khan of Tartary, he commanded my master to bring me to his court. Although this seemed to me a very absolute and unreasonable command, we yet hastened to obey it, and repaired directly to the court. There I was much admired ; but the Khan offered my master a sum so paltry, in comparison with my value, that he absolutely rejected his offer. That very evening, however, he received an order to deliver me up at once, under pain of being strangled in case he should refuse compliance with the royal request.

‘This specimen of Tartar politeness was not much to my master’s taste. The command was, however, one which admitted neither of hesitation nor of reply ;

and, for my part, I was not sorry when my master decided on resigning me to my fate, and escaping from this terrible court as quickly as he could.

‘He took refuge in China, which was then at war with Tartary; and in the hope of being able to recover me, he helped to prolong a bloody war between these two nations.

‘In one of the battles which ensued, the Khan of Tartary, who wore me as an ornament in his turban, was left dead upon the field, and I was seized by a soldier, who rode away with me and afterwards sold me to a travelling merchant. Thus I passed from hand to hand, until I became the property of the Rajah of Borneo, who knew how to estimate me at my proper value. And now, after having visited the most brilliant courts both of Europe and Asia,—after having caused blood to flow for my sake, and many a heart to covet my possession,—*now* I shine the brightest jewel in the scimitar of this powerful prince. No mortal eye can gaze upon me without trembling. How many heads have I already seen to fall before my master’s nod!

‘During the whole course of my long and brilliant career I have everywhere excited the cupidity of mankind. In order to obtain possession of me, men have not shrunk from the commission of the greatest crimes. I have caused war between friendly nations—I have sown disunion amongst brethren, and severed the hearts of husbands and wives from one another. Now, by right of conquest, I adorn the scimitar of an eastern despot; but most probably, ere long, the fortune of war will transfer me to the crown of some other potentate. Now, let Cherry-stone and Flax-seed dare to compare themselves with me! Even you, my mother, who doubtless only intended me to become charcoal, and to serve, like a plebeian, the common purposes of life—are not *you* proud of the distinction I have attained?’

The fairy rose from her throne, and casting upon Brilliant a glance of pity, thus addressed him :—
‘Thou askest me if I am not proud of thy dazzling beauty, and thy career of triumph. Thou speakest with contempt of the dark coal, which is, in truth, thy brother—formed of the same substance as thyself ; know, therefore, that, valueless as it is in *thine* eyes, it is in *mine* a thousand times more precious than thyself. It imparts heat to man, making his hearth to glow with genial warmth ; it serves to cook his food ; in conjunction with water, it creates the steam which sets in motion those ponderous machines that cut and mould the metals of the earth and make them ready for his use ; that steam which propels without oars or sails the stately ship, that now no longer needs the aid of propitious breezes to speed it on its course ; that steam, in short, which, imprisoned in a locomotive, whirls along a railroad, with resistless force, innumerable carriages laden with human beings, or with merchandise ; this coal, which you consider so despicable, is yet capable of emitting that gas whose brilliant flame rivals the light of day ; and yet, thou darest to boast of thy superior beauty ; Thou hast not lived to a single good purpose,—other brilliants of smaller size and inferior lustre compared with thyself, have lived as useful lives as Flaxseed and Cherry-stone. Thousands of little diamonds are busily employed in cutting glass—others are shaped by the cunning lapidary into regular and beautiful forms for ornamental uses, while others assist in this operation, being first crushed into diamond dust, and then employed to cut other diamonds into shape. But thou wast proud and idle. Instead of answering any useful purpose, or being honourably employed in decorating the brow of a virtuous queen, or patriotic prince, thou hast excited the cupidity of man, and stirred the evil passions of

tyrants. Yes, Brilliant ; it is true that I formed thee of a purer substance and imparted to thee a more dazzling brightness, but thou hast not added aught of *goodness* to thy *beauty* ; in all that thou hast told me of thy history, wickedness and death seem to me to have been thy chief attendants.'

'But, my mother,' replied Brilliant, 'was it my fault if you chose to make me so beautiful?'

'Silence !' replied the fairy ; 'thou mightest have seen by the adventures of Sancy, that a diamond is also capable of doing good ; but deeds and triumphs such as *these* were not fitted to awaken aught of emulation within *thy* breast, they only excited thy mockery. And now, since thou makest it thy boast, that thou art the brightest ornament of a despot's scimitar, *this* shall be thy punishment: Thou shalt retain thy place upon that glittering hilt—thou shalt share thy master's tortures—and learn that it is no easy, no happy lot to be a tyrant!—to see the sword of vengeance ever suspended over the head—to feel the stings of remorse ever rankling in the breast. Sleep flies from the tyrant's pillow—poison lurks within his cup—and the most dainty fare is bitter to his taste. These shall be thy penalties ; thou shalt share thy master's torment !

'As for you Flax-seed you may retain the form of paper, since such is your desire, but take heed that you never serve to propagate falsehood and calumny ; repel perfidious enchanters who would fain through your means sow discord and confusion among their fellow-men. Spread the knowledge of good far and wide ; teach the young to love truth and virtue, that so future generations may have cause to bless you. And, while you thus worthily fulfil your high mission, doubt not but that my favour and protection will ever be extended to you.'

'With you also, Cherry-stone, I am well pleased ;

I give you as your reward the permission to remain with your kind and long-tried friends. May length of days be granted to you, as well as to Flax-seed, since you, like him, have fulfilled the end of your creation, and been of use to man during the varied course of your existence.'

Cherry-stone and Flax-seed gratefully kissed the hand the good fairy extended towards them, while Brilliant, too late, alas ! conscious of his faults, retired from the presence of his sovereign, overwhelmed with sorrow and confusion.

LUCILLA.—'This poor Brilliant was indeed severely punished for his impertinence and his pride. But now, mamma, your three tales are finished, and I like them so much, wont you tell me some more another night ?'

MOTHER.—'Perhaps I may, my love ; but now I want you to tell me what you have understood and learned by the tales I *have* told you.'

LUCILLA.—'One lesson I have learnt, mamma, was, that God's works are far more wonderful and beautiful than anything I have ever heard or read of in any fairy tales, and that all He does is good and useful. And I think the history of Flax-seed and Cherry-stone was meant to teach us that God is like a good Father, who only sends us trials to do us good, so that we ought to bear them patiently, and to trust Him, even when things do not go on exactly as we like. Just as when you are displeased with me sometimes, dear mamma, though it makes me very unhappy, yet I know you never punish me except to make me good. I learn from the sad history of Brilliant, that it is possible to possess great natural advantages without making good use of them, so that instead of blessings they prove curses ; and that pride and idleness have a melancholy end.'

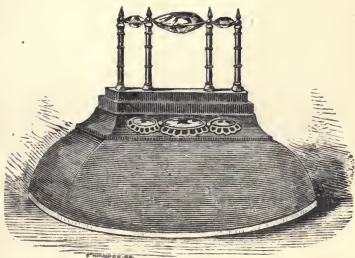
MOTHER.—'Yes, and happy too, my child ; for we

cannot be the one without being the other also, as you may have seen in these little tales. But the more you know of life and of everything which surrounds you, the more deeply you will feel this to be the truth. I wish to teach you to read the great book of nature; there you will learn daily more and more to love and admire Him who has made all these glorious things—who cares for the least as well as the greatest, and will not suffer a sparrow to fall to the ground without his will.'

'A Persian proverb well says, "*Every leaf on a green tree, is also in the eyes of the wise a leaf of that book which teaches us the knowledge of the Creator.*"'

'This smiling and beautiful nature ought also to teach us that we should be gentle and kindly towards all—that we should love the human beings whom God has given us for brethren, and labour earnestly and diligently each to fill our right place in creation, and do our duty in that state of life in which it has pleased God to place us.

'Nature has indeed a thousand tongues, and each one proclaims its Maker's wisdom and love. The rippling of the mountain stream; the humming of the bright-winged insect which flits across our path; the voice of the "morning stars" as they "sing together for joy,"—all unite together in one harmonious concert of praise to the great Creator of Heaven and earth; *their* "speech goes forth into all lands, and their words unto the end of the world;" teaching *us*, though with a silent speechless voice, that a *Father's* hand is ruling over all, and calling upon us as loving and obedient children to do his will; and tread cheerfully our allotted path on earth, be it high or low, in poverty or in wealth, knowing that it has been chosen for us by One who doeth all things well.'



The Koh-i-noor Diamond, as Exhibited in the Crystal Palace.

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