

came out to meet them; she had such a delightful surprise for them. During their absence a man had come round with a cart full of plants in pots to sell. Mother had chosen a plant for each child to put in their own little garden. There was a rose for Barbara, a sweet-william for Dorothea, a red daisy for Penelope, and a pot of fragrant musk for Charley, which, though not so pretty as the others, perhaps, was sweeter than any of them. They were all very delighted with their treasures, and ran out at once to plant them in their gardens.

Next morning the children all went down to the station with Aunt Dora, to see her off on her journey to Putney.

'Good-bye! good-bye! good-bye!' they all called out.

'Good-bye!' waved Aunt Dora from the carriage window, as the train moved on. When she sat down, she noticed on the seat beside her a parcel, and on it was written in large round hand, 'For the blind man, from Charley.' Inside the parcel was a pot of sweet-smelling musk.

E. G.

### THE SQUIRRELS' LESSON.

TWO little squirrels, out in the sun;  
One gathered nuts, the other had none.  
'Time enough yet,' his constant refrain;  
'Summer is still only just on the wane.'

Listen, my child, while I tell you his fate—  
He roused him at last, but he roused him too late;  
Down fell the snow from a pitiless cloud,  
And gave little squirrel a spotless white shroud.

Two little boys in a schoolroom were placed,  
One always perfect, the other disgraced:  
'Time enough yet for my learning,' he said;  
'I will climb, by-and-by, from the foot to the head.'

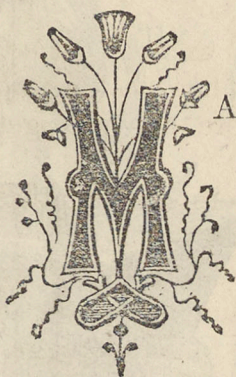
Listen, my darling: their locks are turned gray;  
One as a governor sitteth to-day;  
The other, a pauper, looks out at the door  
Of the almshouse, and idles his days as of yore.

Two kinds of people we meet every day:  
One is at work, the other at play;  
Living uncared for, dying unknown—  
The busiest hive hath ever a drone.

Tell me, my child, if the squirrels have taught  
The lesson I longed to implant in your thought?  
Answer me this, and my story is done—  
Which of the two would you be, little one?

### WHY MABEL ALTERED HER WILL.

(Concluded from page 45.)



AB had a new story that had been lent her; but her parents had not been long gone when she looked up from her book and remarked, rather carelessly, 'What a bore it must be to make a new will!'

'Yes, indeed,' answered Alice; 'more bother than ever I would have: but I add a codicil to mine now and then.'

'I don't know what that is,' said Mab, rather fretfully.

'Oh! just a little bit added,' replied Alice, with the utmost good humour. 'I have had two or three beautiful things given me since I made my will, so I just added to it who was to have them. You know my lovely work-box, Mab, that Aunt Alice sent me, fitted up for every sort of work one could think of? Great pity it ever came to me, for I detest work; so in the last codicil to my will I have left it to Désirée, who works so beautifully; she will make good use of it.'

A thought came to Jessie like an inspiration, 'Should you like to put a codicil to your will, Mab?' she asked, eagerly.

'Yes, I think I should,' was the answer.

Jessie at once started for Mab's desk and put it before her. There was silence for some time; at last Mab inquired, 'Should you like to know what I have put?'

They were what Alice called dying with curiosity, and they answered at once, 'Oh, yes, please!'

Mab read in a grave voice, 'I give and bequeath my *Grimm* with the red and gold cover to Charlie.'

Jessie clapped her hands with delight, and exclaimed, 'I am so glad! I could not bear—'

A little punch from Alice, which meant 'Be prudent,' made her stop short; but Mab took no notice, and the three had a pleasant evening.

The following Saturday, which was the boys' half-holiday, the rain was pouring down so heavily that the children amused themselves indoors. Presently Alice threw down on the table a book she had just finished, and said,—

'I think, after all, I like *The Daisy-Chain*





Charlie engrossed with the Book.

best of the books Miss George lent me. I shall choose it for my Christmas present.'

'I thought you meant to have *The Water Babies*?' observed Jessie.

'You see I have altered my mind.'

'Are you quite sure you won't have *The Water Babies*?'

'Quite.'

'Then I think I will,' said Jessie; 'unless father knows of some book on geology, not too difficult, nor too expensive.'

'I shall have two or three new tools for my box,' observed Bobbie, who was carving a picture frame; 'you girls use my tools till you have quite taken off the edge of two or three. When I have some new ones I shall lock them up.'

'Of course you will give us the old ones?' remarked Alice.

'On condition you never want the new ones.'

'A book is the best thing for one's Christmas present,' interrupted Charlie. 'I shall have old *Grimm*. I want one of my own.'

'You need not,' exclaimed Jessie, eagerly; 'Mab has left you her beauty in her will.'

'Has she? Have you, Mab?' inquired Charlie, in the greatest surprise. 'How very jolly of you! Thank you!' But after a pause he went on, astonished more than ever at Mab's heightened colour,—'But I think I should like one of my own for daily use; you see, Mab, you will perhaps live a hundred years. I hope you will, and then your *Grimm* will do capitally for my little son; but almost every day I





Désirée her Mother's devoted little Nurse.

read one of Grimm's tales or one of Percy's ballads, and I can't ask you to fetch your *Grimm* for me now you are so lame, so I think it would be best to have one for common use.'

I must explain that Mab had always been very selfish about her books; she had some

hiding-place for her best ones, and if the other children asked for the loan of one of these she was sure to say, in the most ungracious manner, 'I can't fetch it now; can't you wait till I leave the room?'

Naturally, they had almost entirely ceased



to borrow anything of her. Still flushed, and speaking not without effort, Mab said, 'Father tells me I can have part of the lowest shelf in his big, carved book-case—the end nearest the fire-place; so you can go and get it for yourself, without asking me, whenever you want it; every day if you like; only please put it back when you have done with it.'

'A thousand thanks,' said Charlie, merrily. 'I'll have it this minute, then.'

And he soon returned book in hand, and was for the present too much engrossed for further conversation.

My little readers will see that Mab is no longer refusing to listen to the Holy Dove that whispers to each Christian child; she is listening, and, though often with much difficulty, striving to obey, and so we might be well content to leave her; but for those who are interested in the little Glynns, I will give a scene from their life more than a year after the events narrated in my story.

It was a lovely summer evening. Alice and her favourite friend, Désirée, were walking up and down the lawn, greatly engrossed in conversation.

Désirée Hamilton was the child of an English father and a French mother. The latter had been very ill the previous year, and after the air of several English seaside places had been tried without any good result the doctors had advised that she should spend the winter in her native air near Cannes.

This had answered so well that a few weeks before this time the Hamiltons had returned to Hastings; Mrs. Hamilton being so far recovered, it was hoped one more winter abroad would make her quite strong.

Désirée was now come to spend a fortnight with Alice, and the friends had so much to talk about they scarcely knew where to begin.

'And so your brothers are gone to school?' observed Désirée. 'How much you must have missed them! Were you not dreadfully dull?'

'Oh, yes! at first we left off playing our old favourite games, and have scarcely ever taken to them again; but after a time there were the holidays to look forward to. We counted the days, and when they came at last they were so delightful it almost made up for everything.'

'Ah! I know all about it,' exclaimed Désirée; 'for when we went to Cannes my

brothers went to Harrow, and mother seemed to pine for her boys. Father declared she got better from the very day they came to us for the Christmas holidays. But, oh, Alice! she was so ill—she seemed to grow thinner and paler every day, and her large dark eyes looked so mournful, and yet she was really the brightest of us all. Father always said she seemed to be more in Heaven than on earth already. *Pauvre petit père!* he tried to be cheerful with her, but away from her he could scarcely bear up sometimes. Mother was sorrowful when she saw his anxious face, or thought how much the boys and I should miss her; but for that, all was so bright and peaceful—darling mother!' Désirée's dark eyes filled with tears.

Alice did not then know what she afterwards heard from her own mother, that during all that long sad time Désirée had been her mother's devoted little nurse, her father's greatest comfort, his sunbeam as he always called her, helping and cheering both parents by her sweet, loving ways, her tact, and a thoughtfulness far beyond her years.

She seemed now to be thinking of the past, and Alice respected her silence. Presently Désirée, smiling through her tears, exclaimed, gaily,—

'And you, too, have a morning governess. That is quite a change. How do you like it?'

'Oh, I scarcely know! Pretty well. I don't care much any way. Of course, I know it is better for us. We are so much more regular, and punctual, and we work twice as hard; but then I am not devoted to books.'

'How can you say so, Alice?' remarked Désirée; 'you have almost always a book in your hand.'

'An amusing book, or a story, my dear; that is a very different thing. I dislike trouble, and shall never be a scholar.'

'But you like her—your *gouvernante*? Miss Marshall, is it not?'

'Oh, yes! she is kind and clever; rather strict about lessons. I rather think Mab is her favourite.'

'*Est-il possible?*' exclaimed Désirée, with a look of such unbounded astonishment that for some time Alice could not reply for laughing. At last she said, 'You know Mab is very clever, and always took to lessons and liked them.'



‘But surely Jessie is far more clever?’

‘Jessie knows a great deal about some things; father even is surprised at her knowledge of natural history. I wish I knew my Bible as well as she does; but some of the regular school-room things she dislikes. Arithmetic, for instance: she scarcely ever does a sum right; and music she hates, and is always begging to leave it off. Miss Marshall is a good musician, and of course this vexes her. Mab rarely loses a mark. Of course I don’t know that she is a favourite, for Miss Marshall is kind and fair to all three, but I fancy she is; and I heard her say to mother that she could fancy Mab had a bad temper, but she had never seen any proof of it.’

As Désirée looked as if she could not believe it, Alice went on: ‘She is really very much improved, Désirée, and I think when you have been here a fortnight you will say so. Since she hurt her foot, and was laid up for some time, she has never been so domineering and disagreeable as when you knew her.’

‘Then I suppose the boys no longer speak of her as “*Ursa Major*?”’ inquired Désirée.

Alice laughed and observed, ‘She has lost that title a long time; sometimes if she gets too much opposition she runs off. Mother said we were to take no notice when she did this. I suppose poor Mab wishes to fight the battle out by herself, for she is sure to come back all right. I can’t help respecting poor little Mab sometimes. She struggles against her temper far more bravely than I do against my idleness.’

At this moment Mab, who had been working in her garden, came up to them.

‘Will you have a game of croquet?’ she asked. ‘I know where Jessie is, and I will soon get out the balls and mallets.’

‘Oh! please not this evening, Mab,’ answered Alice. ‘Désirée and I have so much to talk about; we have not said a tenth part.’

‘But if you can wait till to-morrow we will play with pleasure,’ said Désirée, in her pretty, courteous way.

‘All right,’ said Mab, nodding and walking off towards the house.

‘Oh, Mab!’ called out Alice, ‘if you would water my garden it would be such a charity.’

‘I am going in to practise,’ answered Mab, walking on quickly; but when she reached the

door she turned, and said rather loudly, ‘I shall be watering my own garden when the sun is off, and then I will water yours.’

‘Thanks, dear, good, benevolent creature!’ exclaimed Alice.

Désirée was silent for some time, and seemed lost in thought. At last she observed, ‘How many things can happen in a year! how very many things!’

As Alice did not reply, Désirée went on: ‘In a year your brothers have gone to school, and so have mine. In a year you have a morning governess,—so have I. In a year we have lived at four or five different places—Torquay, the Isle of Wight, Bournemouth. Then we took dear mother to Cannes so ill, almost dying, and now we have brought her to Hastings almost well. And most wonderful of all, Mab has grown pleasant! All this in a year!’

Désirée was right: among all the changes and chances that happen to us in this mortal life, is anything so wonderful as that which takes place in the heart of grown person or child who, after long resistance, yields to the sweet influences of the Holy Spirit, and so passes from darkness into light, from the love of self to the love of God and man? A\*.

## THE VILLAGE CHURCH.

I WAS a weary-hearted man,  
And life to me was very drear;  
So, when the Day of Rest had come,  
I left my home and wandered here.

I sat me down to rest awhile  
Beneath a green and spreading tree;  
And on that glowing summer morn  
How sweet its shelter was to me!

Sweet was the singing of the birds,  
And sweet the tinkling Sabbath bell.  
Ah, me! when I was but a boy,  
That pleasant sound! I knew it well!

My mother used to lead me forth  
Each Sunday to the house of prayer;  
I often watched her gentle face,  
And marked the peace that settled there.

But I went forth into the world,  
With all its turmoil and its strife,  
And gentle thoughts and holy words  
They passed away out of my life.