DAISY AND BUTTERCUP.

By the Author of "I Promised Father."

CHAPTER I.

"WELL, good-bye, Katy. I've enjoyed having you here ever so much. Mind you come and see me again before we go abroad."

"Yes, if I can. Good-bye, Stella." And Katy descended the flight of low stone steps, and set off down the drive on her homeward walk. But the smile with which she had bidden good-bye faded from her face as she walked on, and a very grave expre sion took its place. She had not her usual bright smile for the lodgekeeper's two little children who came running out to meet her, but passed them by coldly and rather hurriedly. She was not in a humour just then for their shy, pleased greeting.

Outside the gates the road stretched long and straight, with the trees meeting overhead and the declining sun sending shafts of light through their stems. The rooks were cawing lazily on their homeward flight; a lark was singing his vesper song far away in the blue sky; the air seemed full of the fragrance of wild flowers.

But neither birds, sun, nor flowers had any attractions just then for Katy Marston as she trudged along the dusty road with her head bent and a very dissatisfied expression on her usually bright face.

Katy had been spending the afternoon with her friend Stella Branscombe, the only daughter of the squire, and a very important little personage, not only in her own eyes, but in those of the villagers and of the servants at the hall.

Katy, on the contrary, was only the daughter of the village doctor, and, instead of being an only child, had four brothers to share the doctor's rather small home and narrow income; consequently the two girls led very different lives, and it was this difference which Katy was reviewing at the present moment, and which was filling her mind with envy and discontent.

She and Stella had not met for two or three months until to-day, as the latter had been paying a prolonged visit to London with her parents, and had just returned very full of all the delights of the gay season: the sights she had seen, the parties she had attended, her new dresses, her birthday presents, and, in short, her own affairs generally. These were infinitely more interesting to her than her friend's concerns, about which she inquired scarcely anything; but poor Katy had found it rather an effort to keep up an appearance of interest all the afternoon, and had felt tired and vexed repeatedly.

"How selfish and egotistical Stella has grown!" she said to herself in some disgust, which, however, was not unmixed with envy.

Altogether, the long afternoon the two friends had spent together had not been quite so pleasant to Katy as she had anticipated. Stella had greeted her effusively, to be sure, and seemed heartily glad to see her; but then, as Katy said, rather bitterly, to herself, "it was only because she wanted to have some one to show off before."

So when Stella had displayed all her new dresses and Paris hats, and the birthday presents she had received a few days before, including a lovely necklace of pearls, with earrings to match—her father's gift—she must needs take Katy out to the stables to show her her new horse.

"We'd ride together, if only you knew how," she said, patronisingly; "for I shall never care to ride Dandy again," turning rather disdainfully to a loose-box where stood a pretty, cream-coloured pony, an old favourite, superseded now by the new horse. "I should not care to ride Dandy again," Stella repeated, "but he'd do for you very well; only, you see, you do not know how to ride."

"And I should not have time, either, thank you," Katy responded, coldly. She did not like to be patronised.

Then the girls adjourned to the garden, where tea was presently served under the shade of the large weeping ash. Such a dainty little tea-table, with its small silver gipsy kettle hissing and bubbling merrily, the silver teapot and cake-basket, the piled-up dish of strawberries, and the staid old butler to wait upon the two girls.

If Katy were inclined to be quiet Stella never noticed, only too well pleased to hear the sound of her own voice. She was busy now dilating upon the anticipated pleasure of a tour in Switzerland upon which she was to start in a few days' time with her parents. "Don't you wish you were going with us, Katy?" she demanded. "It will be awfully jolly; for, though I have been on the Continent three times already, I have never been the whole round of the Swiss lakes. I wish you had been going, too; we should have had such fun. But, oh! there's the carriage coming round! Have you finished tea? Then let us run back to the house. Papa and mamma are going out to dinner, and I want to see if mamma has finished dressing yet. She looks so lovely in full dress."

So the girls ran off to the drawing-room, where they found Mrs. Branscombe standing in front of the pier-glass giving a few finishing touches to the flowers she wore in her bosom, while her maid stood by holding a delicate white opera-cloak ready to throw round her shoulders.

Mrs. Branscombe was a tall, handsome woman, and Stella had not exaggerated when she said her mother looked lovely in full dress. She was wearing a creamy satin gown, which fell round her stately figure in lustrous folds, matching in shade the fragrant Gloire de Dijon roses with which it was lavishly adorned. Diamonds were twinkling and glittering on her neck and arms, and shining in the smooth bands of her black hair.

Katy felt slightly awed by the stately beauty of Mrs. Branscombe, but Stella sprang forward with a rapturous little cry of admiration as she seized her mother's hand. "Oh, mamma, how beautiful you look! I wish I was just two years older, and then I could be going with you!"

But Mrs. Branscombe pushed her away a trifle impatiently, and her voice sounded fretful and complaining as she answered, "There, there, child, that will do! You will only soil my glove with your hot hand."

The irritable repulse and the fretful tones struck Katy with a sort of little shock. Her own mother never spoke so to her children, and she looked anxiously at Stella to see how she took the words. Evidently they were nothing new to Stella, who continued to chat away in her usual tones, and Katy soon forgot the momentary impression.

It had faded almost entirely from her mind as she wended her way homewards through the fragrant country lane. She was thinking, instead, of how lovely Mrs. Branscombe had looked in her creamy satin robes, and wishing that her own mother could dress as grandly and richly. How proud she would feel of her if she could only see her so instead of in that never-ending brown merino, or the worn and turned black silk which Katy seemed to have known for many years. How poor and mean and shabby they were in comparison, while as for diamonds—why, Mrs. Marston did not possess one in the world, and her jewellery seemed to be confined to her wedding-ring and simple keeper, and the one gold brooch with Katy's grandmother's hair in it.

She caught herself up suddenly here. Was she going to feel ashamed—even in her innermost heart—of her own dear mother? Her mother, whom she loved more than anyone else in the world; the mother with her never-failing love and tenderness; her smiles, her kind words, her unceasing care for and devotion to her husband and children. A great rush of compunction and self-reproach filled Katy's heart as she asked herself the question: Was she going to be ashamed of that tender gentle mother? No; a thousand times no!

She had reached home by this time, and as she tripped up the little garden pathway she could see into the drawing-room, where, at the table in the window, dressed in the worn brown merino, with an overflowing work-basket by her side, Mrs. Marston was sitting. She looked up with her usual gentle smile of welcome as she caught sight of her little daughter. Katy was in the room in half a minute kissing the dear loving face.

"Back again, mother dear!" she said.

"Yes, little one, I am glad to have you back. Have you had a nice day?"

"Yes, thank you," Katy answered, rather shortly. "Mother, I'll help you with those socks. You know I can mend them nearly as neatly as you do now."

She was soon seated in a low chair by the window with a small heap of unmended socks on the floor by her side; but as she sat darning away industriously she unconsciously fell into silence, and her thoughts began to take the same line they had done as she walked home. Mrs. Marston, watching her from time to time, saw the shadow gathering over her face, and with fond motherly intuition guessed that something was wrong. But she was never in the habit of forcing the confidence of her children, and so waited for Katy to speak. The silence did not last very long; Katy soon began to speak of what was in her mind.

"Oh, mother dear," she began, "I saw Mrs. Branscombe this evening, dressed for a dinner party. She looked lovely; in such a rich satin dress, such a lovely creamy shade, and with such exquisite diamonds; they almost dazzled one, they sparkled so. Oh, mother, I should like to see you dressed so; you'd be every bit as beautiful as Mrs. Branscombe, and you're just as much a lady as she is. Don't you ever wish you could dress as she does? Why, you haven't got any silk dress but your old black one, and I don't think you have a diamond in the world."

"That does not trouble me, darling," Mrs. Marston answered, smiling back into her little daughter's face. "I have my jewels which are of much greater value—you and the boys—and so long as I have you all safe and well, and dear father too, I am more than content."

Katy carefully threaded her needle and began another large darn before she replied, and when she spoke she changed the subject.

"Oh, mother, do you know Stella is going to Switzerland with her parents in about a week's time? They are to stay for ever so many weeks. I wish, how I wish, I was going too! I do so long to go abroad, and I don't think I shall ever have the chance." Then, after a short pause, "Mother, I do think

Stella is the very luckiest girl there ever was. Here she is just home from London, where she has been seeing all there was to see; going to picture galleries and attending concerts—how I should love to go to a concert!—and dancing at parties. I don't mean real grown-up parties, for of course she hasn't come out yet; and then she has got such hosts of the loveliest dresses you ever saw—evening dresses and travelling dresses, and every other kind. Mrs. Branscombe seems to think nothing is too good for her; and the squire has just bought her a most lovely horse, and a set of pearls that I am sure have cost ever so much, besides a whole host of birthday presents. I think it would be so nice to be made as much of and to be as pretty as Stella is. She has such a quantity of golden hair, and such a fair complexion, and such blue eyes. It does feel hard that one girl should have so many advantages and another so few. It doesn't seem fair!"

"Discontented, Katy?" asked her mother, gently. "Have you been seeing all the nice things Stella has got, and been growing dissatisfied with your own lot? You must not say it is unfair, my love. It is right that some should be rich and some poorer, but I assure you that happiness does not consist in wealth. If Stella has some advantages you have not, perhaps she has many other things to grieve and trouble her that you know nothing of.'

"But she can't have," Katy replied, decidedly. "What more could any girl want than she has? Beautiful dresses, a fine house, plenty of servants to wait on her, a horse to ride, and, oh! mother, she is so pretty with it all."

Mrs. Marston looked down into the little flushed, eager face, but she did not give words to the thought which passed through her mind that the clear, sun-burnt complexion, the dark shining eyes, and the wealth of unruly brown curls were, in their way, quite as lovely as Stella Branscombe's blonde beauty. She only replied, as she gently stroked the flushed cheek—

"Do you remember that little poem I gave you to learn the other day about the daisy and the buttercup?"

"You mean the buttercup that wished she was a daisy, because she was tired of always dressing in 'the same old tiresome colour,' and had always wanted to wear a nice white frill. Oh, you naughty mother, you mean I am the discontented buttercup. I don't mean to be, but I afraid I am," she added ingenuously.

"And what did the robin say to the discontented buttercup?" questioned her mother, with a smile.

And Katy repeated—

"'The swallows leave *me* out of sight;
We'd better keep our places;
Perhaps the world would all go wrong
With one too many daisies.
Look bravely up into the skies,
And be content with knowing
That God wished for a buttercup
Exactly where you're growing.'"

Katy's voice took a lower and more reverent tone as she repeated the last two lines, and the cloud lifted a little from her face.

Mrs. Marston went on, "I always like that little parable; it teaches so much. And you may be very sure, little daughter, that if God wants to have a buttercup growing just where He places it, that He knew quite well all about it when He put Stella Branscombe in her place as the squire's only child and you as the doctor's daughter, your brothers' kind, helpful little friend and your mother's right hand. Won't you try to be content to be a buttercup, Katy, and leave the daisies to bloom where God has placed them?"

Katy made no reply. She bent her head over her work, but she could see neither needle nor thread for the tears which were filling her eyes. Of course, mother was right; she always was, and then Katy relieved herself by a burst of quiet crying on that loving mother's breast, while Mrs. Marston laid her work aside and talked to her little daughter wisely and tenderly as they sat alone in the gathering twilight, until Katy's eyes were once more quite dry and the little evil spirit of envy and discontent had been exorcised for the time being.

To be mother's great comfort; mother's right hand; yes, that was better even than Paris dresses and pearl necklaces; better even than a journey to Switzerland. Yes, she would be content to be a buttercup and bloom where God had placed her.

(*To be continued.*)

GIRLS' WORK AND WORK-SHOPS.

By RUTH LAMB.

CHAPTER IV.

SILK CULTIVATION AND THE SILK MILL.

SINCE this series of papers was commenced, I have entered into conversation with numbers of persons who handle the fabrics from which our clothing is made, and have been surprised to find how little those who sell, sew, or wear them, know about their history or mode of production. This fact has induced me to step a little outside the lines I at first marked out, and, not merely to describe the girls' share in the different manufactures, but to teach the workers themselves something about the material before it reaches them and after it has passed through their hands. If I were a girl working amongst silk, cotton, or any other material, I should not be content to understand merely that stage of its development in which I was practically engaged. I should want to know how it came into the state in which I received it, and what would be done with it after it left my hands.

Almost every one who reads at all, knows that silk is produced by a species of caterpillar, and that to the labours of this insignificant little creature we owe all our richest, most costly, and beautiful articles of dress.

It is quite worth any girl's while to procure a few silkworms' eggs, hatch them, and watch the growth of the insect and its mode of producing the raw material, though the climate of this country is too cold and too variable for silk cultivation on a large scale to be remunerative.

The eggs are hatched at a temperature of about 82 deg., and the tiny worms, for the purpose of experiment, may be fed on young lettuce leaves—those of the mulberry not being easily procurable in this country. They are very small at first, like little dark moving threads; but they have fine appetites and grow rapidly, changing their skins four or five times before they reach maturity.

Each change of skin is a trying period for the worm, which ceases to eat before it takes place, and many die during the time of casting their covering.

A full-grown, well-nurtured worm in its native land is nearly three inches long and of a greenish-white colour. It is a stop-at-home creature; all it seems to care about is the having plenty of food to supply a voracious appetite.

Even when reared on mulberry trees in the open air, the little creatures do not wander, and a cardboard tray lined with clean paper, which should be changed from time to time as it becomes necessary, makes a suitable dwelling for a girl's stock of worms.

The creature has a large head, a sort of horn on the last joint of its body, and within it, and extending nearly the whole length, are two tubes containing and secreting a sticky substance from which the silk is spun. These tubes unite near the opening whence the thread issues in a single cord. Our little worker is, however, both a spinner and a doubler in its own person, for, on examining the thread through a microscope, we find it is composed of two distinct filaments; one produced by each tube, and joined together as they issue from the body.

When the worm is ready to spin, it ceases eating and commences its work by attaching coarse fibres to twigs placed for the purpose. In Italy, little trays divided into square cells are used for the worms to spin in, or they may be placed separately in paper cones, which they will speedily line with silk. At first you may see them working away as within a veil, but the screen thickens, the walls of the cocoon increase rapidly, and the worm is finally lost to sight to be seen no more in the same shape. The spinning occupies five days.

The work finished, the caterpillar becomes a chrysalis, and this in turn changes into a velvety white moth, which will eat its way out of the cocoon in from two to three weeks, if not destroyed. This is allowed to a certain extent, as sufficient moths must be preserved to lay eggs for the next season. The shape of the cocoon tells the sex of the moth enclosed within it, and an equal number of males and females are carefully selected.

The moths, like the worms, move but little from the spot in which they were perfected, taking almost no food and rarely using the wings as a means of locomotion. Their life in the last stage is short, and they seem to exist as moths only to continue the species and to leave eggs to be hatched when summer comes round again.

When the cocoons have been selected as above, the others are placed in ovens sufficiently heated to kill the moths, for were these allowed to eat their way through the silken wal' it would be greatly deteriorated and could not be wound. Should the worm die befor its work is finished, a change is observable in the shape of the cocoon, and the silk will be of inferior quality.

The thread produced by a single worm is sometimes 1,100 feet in length, and it is usual to obtain 300 yards of good silk from a single cocoon. But you must not suppose that the fibre, as it comes from the worm, is thick enough to be wound singly, though it is already double.

The cocoons are placed in water heated by steam, and gently stirred with a twig, from time to time, until the gum with which the silk is impregnated dissolves sufficiently to set the ends at liberty. Four or five of these are taken together and gradually twisted into one as they run through a glass eye in passing from the cocoons to the reel. As they travel the moistened animal gum dries again, and the fibres adhere and form a single thread. The important part this gum performs in dyeing will be shown hereafter.

We are accustomed to regard silk as a very dainty material, and cotton as a comparatively coarse one, but it is astonishing to see what rough usage the former will bear in comparison with the latter. It is extremely tenacious and elastic, and will endure a strain to which a cotton thread of the same size would be quite unequal. The cause is self-evident. Cotton thread is made up of an immense number of short hairs, combed and twisted together. Silken thread is composed of several fibres, each one of which measures 300 yards or upwards.

The silk reeler should be very attentive to the work in hand to secure an even thread. If one of the number she is reeling should break or run out it should be joined imme-