Urheberrechtlich geschütztes Material

MRS. MOLESWORTH

TREDITION CLASSICS

Hoodie

Urheberrechtlich geschütztes Material

The Project Gutenberg eBook of Hoodie

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: Hoodie

Author: Mrs. Molesworth

Illustrator: Lewis Christopher Edward Baumer

Release date: July 25, 2008 [eBook #26125]

Language: English

Other information and formats: www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/26125

Credits: E-text prepared by Chris Curnow, Lindy Walsh, and the Project Gutenberg Online Distributed Proofreading Team

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK HOODIE ***

E-text prepared by Chris Curnow, Lindy Walsh,
and the Project Gutenberg Online Distributed Proofreading Team
(http://www.pgdp.net)

Hoodie

By Mrs. MOLESWORTH

ILLUSTRATED BY LEWIS BAUMER

W. & R. CHAMBERS. LIMITED.
LONDON AND EDINBURGH.
1897

Edinburgh:
Printed by W. & R. Chambers, Limited.



"Nobody loves poor Hoodie."

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I. AT WAR WITH THE WORLD

CHAPTER II. HOODIE GOES IN SEARCH OF A GRANDMOTHER
CHAPTER III. LITTLE BABY AND ITS MOTHER
CHAPTER IV. MAUDIE'S GODMOTHER
CHAPTER V. STORIES TELLING
CHAPTER VI. "THE CHINTZ CURTAINS"
CHAPTER VII. TWO TRUES
CHAPTER VIII. HOODIE'S FOUNDLING
CHAPTER IX. THE GOLDEN CAGE
CHAPTER X. FLOWN
CHAPTER XI. HOODIE'S DISOBEDIENCE
CHAPTER XII. HOODIE AWAKES

Books by Mrs. Molesworth

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Nobody loves poor Hoodie"

"I had my basket on my arm, and the big doggie stood beside me"

"It's just like Martin's cottage"

"Who is zou, please?"

Poor Cross

"Up in the nursley," said Hoodie coolly

"Has zou had a nice sleep?"

"He took off the cap and bowed low"

Hec and Duke ... sticking daisies on to a thorn

"If peoples interrumpt, I wish they'd finish their interrumpting, and not stop in the middle"

"The darling," said Hoodie ecstatically

Hec refused to be comforted

"Please 'agive me and kiss me"

"Slowly and cautiously, whistling softly all the time"

"Oh dear," she exclaimed. "Are the flowers all gone?"

"Tell Martin they're for Miss Maudie with Miss Hoodie's love"

Finis



CHAPTER I.

AT WAR WITH THE WORLD.

"Who would think so small a thing
Could make so great a pother?"

A pretty, cheerful nursery—a nursery in which surely children could not but be happy—with pictures on the walls and toys in the glass-doored cupboard, and rocking-horse and doll-house, and everything a child's heart could wish for. Spring sunshine faint but clear, like the first pale primrose, peeping in at the window, a merry fire crackling away in the tidy hearth. And just in front of it, for it is early spring only, a group of children pleasant to see. A soft-haired, quiet-eyed little girl, a book open upon her knee, and at each side, nestling in beside her, a cherub-faced dot of a boy, listening to the story she was reading aloud.

Such a peaceful, pretty picture! Ah yes—what a pity to disturb it. But I must show you the whole of it. Into this pretty nursery flies another child—a tiny fairy of a girl, tiny even for her years which are but five—in she flies, down the long passage which leads to the children's quarters, in at the nursery door, which, in spite of her hurry, she carefully closes, and seeing that the other door is open closes it too, then, flying back to the centre of the room, deliberately sets to work to—children, can you guess?—to *scream*!

She sheds no tears, there is no grief, only wrath, great and furious, in the little face which should have been so pretty, in the big blue eyes which

should have been so sweet. She shakes herself till her fair, fluffy hair is all in a "touzle," she dances with rage till her neck and arms are crimson, from time to time in the middle of her screams calling out at the pitch of her voice,

"I don't love *any* body. I don't want *any* 'sing. I don't like *any* 'sing. Go away ugly evybody. I don't love Pince. Go away ugly Pince."

The girl by the fire looked up for a moment.

"Prince isn't here," she said. "Oh, Hoodie," she went on wearily, "how *can* you—how can you be so naughty?"

Hoodie turned towards her sister.

"I don't love *zou*, Maudie. Naughty, ugly Maudie. Pince *sall* be here. Naughty Maudie. I *sall* be naughty. I don't love *any* body."

"Nebber mind, Maudie dear, nebber mind naughty Hoodie. Hoodie's always naughty. Please go on, Maudie," said one of the two little boys.

Magdalen tried to go on. But in the midst of such a din, it was very difficult to make herself heard, and at last she gave up in despair.

"It's no good, Hec," she said, "I can't go on. Hoodie spoils everything when she gets like that."

The little fellows' faces lengthened.

"Hoodie 'poils ebery'sing," they murmured.

Just then the door opened.

"Miss Hoodie," said the maid who came in, "Miss Hoodie again! And Sunday morning too—the day

you should be extra good."

"The day she is nearly always extra naughty," said Magdalen, with the superiority of eight years old. "It's no good speaking to her, Martin. She's going to go on—she shut the doors first."

Martin seated herself composedly beside the three children.

"I never did see such a child," she said; "no, never. You would think, Miss Maudie, she might stop if she liked, seeing how she can keep it in like, as long as she's afraid of her Mamma hearing. If she can keep it in till she shuts the doors, she might keep it in altogether, you would think."

"Stop! of course she can stop if she likes," said Magdalen. "What was it set her off, Martin, do you know?"

"Something about Prince," replied Martin. "Thomas said she was trying to get him to come up-stairs with her, and he whistled to him, not knowing, and Prince ran away from her."

"Hoodie's keeped all her bicsits for Pince, for a treat for him for Sunday," said little Hec, with some evident sympathy for Hoodie.

"She shouldn't be so silly then," said Maudie. "What do dogs know about its being Sunday, and treats? I know Hoodie always spoils *our* Sundays, and we're better than dogs."

"I don't love you, naughty Maudie. I don't love *any* body," screamed Hoodie.

"It certainly doesn't look as if you did, and very soon nobody will love you, Miss Hoodie, if you go on so,"

said Martin, virtuously.

"I wish," said Duke, the second twin, "I wish papa would build anoder *gate* big house and put Hoodie to live there all alone, don't you, Maudie? A gate big house where not nobody could hear her sceaming."

Great applause followed this brilliant idea—but the laughter only increased Hoodie's fury. Duke was the next she turned upon.

"I don't love you, naughty, ugly Duke," she screamed. "I don't love *any* body. Go away evybody, go away, go *away*, go AWAY."

Such was Hoodie—poor Hoodie—at five years old!

What had made her so naughty? That was the question that puzzled everybody concerned—not forgetting Hoodie herself.

"I didn't make myself. 'Tisn't my fault. God should have made Hoodie gooder," she would say defiantly.

And was it not a puzzle? There was Maudie, just as nice and good a little girl as one would wish to see, and Hec and Duke, both comfortable, good-natured little fellows—all three, children to whom things came right, and whose presence in the world seemed as natural and pleasant a thing as that of birds in the trees or daisies in the grass. Why should not Hoodie be like them? She was born in July—one bright sunny day when all the world was rejoicing—and little Maudie had been so pleased to have a baby sister, and her godmother had begged that she might be called "Julian," and everybody had, for a time, made much of her. But, alas, as the years went on, they told a different tale—governesses and nurses, sister and brothers, it was the same story with all—

Hoodie's temper was the strangest and the worst that ever a child had made herself and other people miserable by.

"I could really fancy," said Maudie one day, "I could really fancy, if there *were* such things as fairies, you know—that one of them had been offended at not being asked to Hoodie's christening."

And when Hoodie grew old enough to hear fairy tales, this speech of Maudie's came back to her mind, and she wondered, with the strange unexpressed bewilderment of a child, if indeed there were some mystery about her naughtiness—some spell cast upon her which it was hopeless to try to break. For she knew she was naughty, very naughty—she never thought of denying it. Only deep down *somewhere* in her—where, she could not have told—there was a feeling that she did not *want* to be naughty—she did not *like* being naughty—there was a mistake about her somehow or somewhere, which nobody could understand or ever would, and which it never entered her head to try to explain to any one.

The screaming went on steadily—agreeably for Hoodie herself, it is to be hoped, for it certainly was anything but pleasant for other people. Suddenly there came a lull—a step was heard coming along the passage, and light as it was, Hoodie's quick ears were the first to hear it. It was mother!

Hoodie's power of self-control was really very great—her screams ceased entirely, only, as her fury had this time been *very* great even for her, it had naturally arrived at tears and sobs, and in consequence she was not able all at once to stifle the sobs that shook her, or even by scrubbing at her poor eyes with all her might, with a rather grimy little

ball which she called her "pocket-hankerwich," could she succeed in destroying all traces of the storm. She ran over to the window and stood with her back to the door, staring, or pretending to stare, down at the pretty garden beds, gay with crocuses and snowdrops. But mother's eyes were not to be so easily deceived. One glance at the peaceful, though subdued group round the fireplace, one anxious look at the little figure standing solitary by the window, its fat dimpled shoulders convulsively heaving every moment or two, its face resolutely turned away, and mother knew all.

"What is wrong with Miss Julian?" she asked.

"Really, ma'am, I can't quite say. I was down-stairs and when I came back she was in one of her ways, and you know, ma'am, it is no use speaking to her while she's like that. It was just some trifle about Prince, but if it wasn't that it would be something else."

Martin's tone was slightly querulous, but Mrs. Caryll could not resent it. Martin as a rule was so good and patient with the children, and with the other three—Maudie and the boys—there was never a shadow of trouble. Even to Hoodie she was really kind, and though sometimes it did seem as if she did not take what is called "quite the right way with her," it would hardly have been fair to blame her for that, seeing that this mysterious right way in Hoodie's case, was quite as great a puzzle as the passage round the North Pole! So great a puzzle indeed that its very existence had come to be doubted, for hitherto one thing only about it was certain—no one had ever succeeded in finding it.

On the whole, mother herself managed Hoodie better

than any one else, but that, I fear, is not saying much. For whenever, after a long talk and many tears, Mrs. Caryll left the nursery with a somewhat lightened heart, thinking that for some time to come at least there was going to be peace, she was almost *sure* to be disappointed. Generally these very times were followed by the worst outbreaks, and in despair Mrs. Caryll would leave off talks and gentle measures and simply lock the aggravating little girl into her bedroom, whence in a few hours, the fit having at last worked itself off, Hoodie would emerge, silent indeed, but *so* cross, so unbearably irritable, that no one in the nursery dared look at her, much less speak to her, till a night's rest had to some extent soothed her down.

It really seemed as if, as Martin said, there was nothing to do but leave her to herself, and it was with a terror of making things worse that Hoodie's mother now stood and looked at her, asking herself what *would* be best to do.

"Perhaps it would have been better," she said to herself, "if I had taken no notice of anything wrong," for she believed that Hoodie's intense mortification at *mother's* knowing of her naughtiness was what gave her more influence over her than any one else. But it was not quite the kind of influence she most cared to have—mortification, to my thinking, never does any one any good, but only fosters the evil *roots* from whence all these troubles spring. "If Hoodie cared about my knowing for fear of it grieving me, I would understand better how to manage her," thought Mrs. Caryll. "But if it were so she would show her sorrow in a different way. It is her pride, not her love, that is concerned."

She was right, but wrong too. Hoodie was proud, but also intensely loving. She did grieve in her own wild, unreasonable way, at distressing her mother, but most of all she grieved that *she* should be the cause of it. It would have made her sorry for mother to be grieved by Maudie or the boys, but still that would have been different. It was the misery of believing herself to be always the cause of the unhappiness that seemed to come back and back upon her, making the very time at which she was "sorriest," the time at which it was hardest to be good.

Hoodie's mother stood and considered. Then she crossed the room and touched her little girl on the neck. The bare white dumpling of a shoulder just "shruggled itself up" a little higher, but Hoodie gave no other sign of having felt anything.

"Hoodie," said her mother.

No reply.

"*Hoodie*," a little louder.

Hoodie *had* to look round. What a face! Red eyes, tangled hair, frowning forehead, tight shut lips. No, the good angels had not yet found their way back to Hoodie's heart—the little black dog was still curled up on her back, scowling at every one that came near.

"Hoodie," said her mother very quietly, "come with me to my room."

Hoodie did not resist. She allowed her mother to take her hand and lead her away. As the door closed after them Maudie gave a sigh of relief.

"Let's go on with our reading as long as we can," she

said. "Hoodie will be worse than ever after she comes back. As soon as ever mother has gone down again and she thinks she won't hear, she'll begin again. Won't she, Martin?"

"She often is like that," said Martin, "but perhaps she'll be better to-day. Go on reading, Miss Maudie, and take no notice of her when she comes in."

In about ten minutes the door opened and Hoodie appeared. She marched in with a half-defiant air—evidently "humble-pie" had at present no attraction for her. No one took any notice of her. This did not suit Hoodie. She dragged her little chair across the room and placed it beside her sister's.

"Doin' to be dood," she announced.

"I'm glad to hear it, Miss Hoodie," said Martin.

"Doin' to be dood. Maudie, litsen," said Hoodie impatiently, giving Magdalen's chair a jerk, "doin' to be *dood*."

"Very well, Hoodie, only please don't pull my chair," said Maudie, in some fear and trembling.

"You're not to read, you're to litsen when I speak," said Hoodie, "and I will pull your chair, if I like. I love mother, don't love *you*, Maudie, ugly 'sing that you is."

Maudie did not answer. She glanced up at Martin for advice.

"Well, Miss Maudie," said Martin cheerfully, "aren't you going on with your story?"

"It's done, Martin, you forget," said Maudie.

Martin gave her a glance which Maudie understood. "Say something to take off her attention," was the interpretation of it.

"I'll look for another. Don't run away, Hec and Duke," said the elder sister quickly. "I am afraid there is nothing in this book but what we have read lots of times," she added, after turning over the leaves for a minute or two. "I wish it was somebody's birthday soon, and then we'd get some new stories."

"My birthday next," observed Hoodie, complacently.

"No, Hoodie, 'tisn't," exclaimed both the boys, "'tisn't your birthday nextest. 'Tis ours. Aren't it now, Martin? You told us."

"Yes, dears, it is yours next. In June, Miss Hoodie dear, is theirs, you know, and yours won't be till July."

Martin made the statement gingerly. She was uncommonly afraid of what she might be drawing on herself by her venturing to disagree with the small autocrat of the nursery. To her surprise Hoodie took the information philosophically, relieving her feelings only by a piece of biting satire.

"That's acos the months is wrong. When *I* make the months they will come 'July, June,' not 'June, July,'" she said.

Hec and Duke thought this so original that they began laughing. A doubtful expression crept over Hoodie's face. Should she resent it, or laugh with them? Martin took the bull by the horns.

"Shall I tell you a story, my dears?" she said, "of what I once did on one of my birthdays when I was little?

It came into my mind the other day, and I wonder I never told it you before, for it's something like the story of 'Little Red Riding Hood,' that Miss Hoodie got her name from."

"No, no, Martin. Hoodie didn't get her name from that," said Maudie eagerly. "It was this way. Mother got her a little hood *like* Red Riding Hood's in our picture—only it was pink and not scarlet, and Hoodie liked it so, she screamed when they took it off, and once she was ill and she screamed so for it that they had to put it on her even in bed, and she had it on three days running."

"Zee days zunning," repeated Hoodie, nodding her head with great satisfaction. She was evidently very proud of this legend of her infancy.

"Dear me!" said Martin, "that was a funny fancy, to be sure. But the hood wouldn't be so pretty after that."

"No, of course," said Maudie. "It was all crumpled up and spoilt. And mamma got her a new one, but Hoodie wouldn't have it on, and so after that she didn't have hoods any more, only she was always called Hoodie."

"Always called Hoodie," reiterated the heroine of this remarkable anecdote, quite restored to good humour by finding herself looked upon as a historical character.

"And now, Martin, what did you do on your birthday?" said Magdalen.

"It was when I was eight," said Martin. "We lived in the country and we had a nice little farm. My father managed the farm and my mother had the dairy. And

my old grandmother lived about three miles off in a little cottage near a wood—that was one thing that made me say it was like Red Riding Hood. I was very fond of going to see my grandmother, and I always counted it one of my treats. So the day before my birthday mother said to me, 'Janie, you shall go to your grandmother's to-morrow, if you like, as it is your birthday, and I'll pack a little basket for you to take to her, with some fresh eggs and butter. And I'll make a little cake for you to take too, and you shall stay to tea with her and have the cake to eat.'"

"Had it pums in?" said Hec.

"And laisins?" added Duke.

"Silly boy," said Hoodie from the elevation of her five years, "pums *is* laisins."

"Oh," said Duke submissively.

"Do on, Martin, do on, kick, kick, Martin," said Hoodie, "gee-up-ping" on her footstool as if Martin was a lazy horse she was trying to make go faster.

"Well," continued Martin, "I was pleased to go as you can fancy, and the next afternoon off I set. It was such a nice day. The flowers were just at their best—I stopped more than once to gather honeysuckle and twist it round the handle of the basket, it looked so pretty, and when I got to the little wood near which stood grandmother's cottage, I could hardly get on for stopping to look at the flowers that peeped out at the edge that skirted the road. And then I thought to myself how beautiful it must be further in the wood, and what a lovely bunch of cowslips I might gather. There was a little stile just where I was standing—I climbed over it and put the basket down on the

ground, as I could not run with it in my hand, and then off I set, down a little path between the trees, glancing at every side as I ran, for the flowers I wanted. But I was disappointed—in the wood the flowers were not near so pretty as at the edge, and after picking a few, I threw them away again and turned back to the stile, where I had left my basket. But fancy my trouble when I found it was not there! I had been away such a short time, I could not believe it was really gone. I searched and I searched—all in vain—it was really *gone*—so at last I sat down and cried. I cried till I was tired of crying, and then I got up and walked slowly on to grandmother's. She was so kind I knew she would not scold me, but still she would be sorry and disappointed. And I really felt as if I would be too ashamed ever to go home and tell mother. When I got to grandmother's and walked up the little path to the cottage door—she had a nice little garden with roses and stocks and gilly-flowers and sweet-williams and lots of other nice old flowers—I was surprised to see it closed. It was not often grandmother was out of an afternoon, and besides, being my birthday, she might have known I would likely be coming to see her.

"'Everything's gone wrong with me to-day,' I said to myself, and vexed to think of the lost basket and the long hot walk back in the sun, I sat down on the little bench at the door and began to cry again. It seemed too bad that my birthday should be spoilt like that. I had cried so much that my eyes were sore, and I leant my head against the back of the bench—it stood in a sort of little arbour—and closed them. I was not sleepy, I was only tired and stupid-like, but you can't fancy how startled I was when suddenly I felt something lick my hand, which was hanging down at my side. I opened my eyes and

jumped up. There stood beside me a great big dog—a dog I had never seen before, looking up at me with his gentle, soft eyes, while on the ground at my feet was my lost basket! I was so delighted that I couldn't feel frightened, besides, who could have been frightened of such a dear, kind-looking dog? I threw my arms round his neck and hugged him, and told him he was a darling to have found my basket, and for a minute or two I really thought to myself he must be a sort of fairy—he seemed to have come so wonderful-like, all of a sudden. Just then I heard voices coming along the road. I ran to the gate to see who it was, and there, to my joy, was grandmother, and beside her a neighbour of hers, a gamekeeper I had seen now and then. I had my basket on my arm and the big doggie stood beside me."



"I had my basket on my arm and the big doggie stood beside me."

CHAPTER II.

HOODIE GOES IN SEARCH OF A GRANDMOTHER.

"I care for nobody, no, not I,
And nobody cares for me!"

Martin went on with her story:

"'Janie!' cried grandmother when she saw me. 'What a nice picture they make—my little granddaughter and your great dog—don't they?' she said to the gamekeeper.

"'And it was *your* basket, little Janie, that he found at the stile, then,' said the dog's master, and then he and grandmother explained, that walking along the road—grandmother was going up with him to see his wife who was ill—the dog who was following them had suddenly darted to one side and then crept from under the hedge with the basket in his mouth. They couldn't think whose it was, for no one was to be seen about, but when grandmother started to come home again the dog would follow her with it still in his mouth, so Roberts, that was the man's name, came along with her to see the end of it. Now wasn't it clever of the dog to know it was mine and bring it to me like that?"

"*Very*," said the children. "But mightn't your grandmother have known it was your mother's basket?" said Magdalen.

"It was a common enough one, but if she had looked inside she'd have known mother's butter and cake, I daresay," said Martin. "But the funny thing was, the dog would let no one touch it but me—he growled at grandmother when she tried to look in, but he stood by and saw me take out the things and just wagged his tail."

"And did zou have nice tea, and cake, Martin?" said Hec.

"Oh yes, dears, very nice. But for all that it cured me

of setting down baskets or anything like that when I had to take them anywhere. For you see it isn't every dog that would have had the sense of that one."

"And then he *might* have been a woof," suggested Hoodie. "The picture says a woof."

"Yes," said Maudie. "But this isn't the picture story, Hoodie. This was a real story of Martin herself, you know, for there aren't wolfs now."

"Not none?" said Hoodie.

"No, of course not."

Hoodie nodded her head, but made no further remark, and the nursery party congratulated themselves on the astonishing success of their endeavours to "put her crying fit out of her head."

This happy state of things lasted nearly all day. Hoodie was really most agreeable. She was rather more silent than usual, but, for her, surprisingly amiable.

Martin was delighted.

"Take my word for it, Miss Maudie," she said, "the only way with a child like her, is to take no notice and talk of something else."

"But we can't always do that way, Martin,"—Maudie was not of a sanguine temperament,—"sometimes, you know, she's naughty about things that you *must* go on talking to her about, till you get her to do them."

"I can't help it, Miss Maudie," said Martin. "Talk or no talk, it's my belief that no power on earth will get Miss Julian to do what she wants not to do. And

folks can't live always quarrel—quarrelling. She may improve of herself like, when she gets older, but as she is now, I really think the less notice she gets the better."

Maudie felt rather puzzled. She was only nine years old herself, remember, and Hoodie's queer ways were enough to puzzle much wiser heads than hers.

"I don't think Martin's way would do," she said to herself, "but still I think there must be *some* way that would make her gooder if only we could find it."

The children all went to church in the afternoon. The morning service was too long for them, their mother sensibly thought, but the afternoon hour, or hour and a quarter at most, no one, not even wee Hec and Duke, found too much. And Hoodie was rather fond of going to church. What she thought of, perched up by herself in her own corner of the pew, no one ever knew; that she listened, or attempted to listen, to what was going on, was doubtful in the extreme. But still, as a rule, church had a soothing effect on her, the quiet and restfulness, the monotony itself, seemed to calm her fidgety querulousness; possibly even the sensation of her Sunday clothes and the admiring glances of the little school-children helped to smooth her down for the time being.

This special Sunday afternoon their mother was not with them. They went and returned under Martin's convoy, and till about half way on their way home again all went satisfactorily. Then unfortunately occurred the first ruffle. Maudie had been walking on in front with little Duke, Hoodie and Hec, each with a hand of Martin, behind, when Maudie stopped.

"Martin," she said, "may Duke walk with you a little?

He says he's tired."

"Of course, poor dear," said Martin; "come here, Master Duke, and you, Miss Hoodie, go on a little with your sister."

Hoodie let go Martin's hand readily enough.

"Wonders will never cease," thought Martin, but alas, her rejoicing was premature. Hoodie let go her hand, but stood stock still without moving.

"No," she said deliberately, "I won't walk with Maudie. Why can't Hec walk with Maudie, and me stay here?"

"Because he's such a little boy, Miss Hoodie dear, and I daresay both he and Master Duke are getting tired. They've had a long walk you know."

Martin was forgetting her own advice to Maudie. He who stopped to reason with Hoodie was lost indeed!

"And so has me had a long walk, and so you might daresay me is tired too," returned Hoodie, standing her ground both actually and figuratively. Two fat little legs apart, two sturdy little feet planted firmly on the ground, there she stood looking up defiantly in Martin's face, armed for the fight.

"Was there ever such a child?" thought poor Martin. Maudie's words had indeed been quickly fulfilled—here already was a case in which the taking-no-notice system was impossible—the child could not be left by herself on the high-road, where according to present appearances it was evidently her intention to stay unless—she got her own way!

"Well, my dear, I daresay you are tired too," said Martin soothingly, "but still not *so* tired as poor little

Duke. You're ever so much bigger you know. Think what tiny little feet your brothers have to trot all along the road on."

"Mines is tiny too. I heard you saying them was very tiny to Mamma one day. And them's just as tired as Duke's; 'cos I'm bigger, my feets have more heavy to carry. I *will* have your hand, Martin, and I won't walk with ugly Maudie."

"But you must, Miss Hoodie," said Martin, attempting firmness and decision as a last resource.

"But I mustn't, 'cos I *won't*," said Hoodie.

Martin glanced back along the road despairingly. Several groups of the country people on their way home from church were approaching the little party as they stood on the footpath.

"Do come on, Martin," said Maudie; "it is so horrid for the people to see such a fuss. And then they say all about that we are all naughty. Look, there's farmer Bright and his daughters coming. Do come on —you'll *have* to let Hoodie walk with you, and Hec'll come with me."

"Miss Hoodie," said Martin once more, "you are to walk on with Miss Maudie, do you hear?"

"Yes," said Hoodie, without moving an inch, "I hear, but I *won't* walk with ugly Maudie."

The Bright family were fast approaching. In despair Martin turned to Hoodie.

"I am obliged to let you walk with me, Miss Julian," she said, solemnly, "because I cannot have every one in the road see how naughty you are. But when we get home I shall speak to your Mamma, and ask her

to let you go walks alone. You make us all miserable."

Hoodie took Martin's hand and marched on.

"I should like to go walks alone, werry much," she said, amiably, to which remark Martin did not make any reply.

The Bright family passed them with a friendly word to Martin, saying something in praise of the nice appearance of her little charges. And Hoodie smiled back to farmer Bright, as if she thought herself the best and sweetest-tempered of little girls. Then when they were out of sight, she suddenly dropped Martin's hand.

"I don't want to walk with you. You're an ugly 'sing too," she said. "I like to walk belone, but I would walk with you if I *said* I would."

And on she marched defiantly, well in front of the whole party. And again poor Martin murmured to herself,—"Was there *ever* such a child?"

What was Hoodie saying to herself on in front where no one could hear her?

"They don't love me. They like me to be away. Nobody loves poor Hoodie. Hoodie can't be good when nobody loves her. It isn't Hoodie's fault."

And through her babyish brain there ran misty, dreamy ideas of something she would do to make "them" all sorry—she would go away somewhere "far, far," and never come back again. But where? This she could not yet settle about, but fortunately for the peace of the rest of the walk her cogitations kept her quiet till they were all at home again.

Martin's threat of speaking to Hoodie's mother was not at once carried out. And Martin herself began to think better of it when at tea-time Hoodie behaved herself quite respectably. The naughty mood had passed again for the time, it seemed.

Sitting round the table in the intervals of bread-and-butter and honey—for it was Sunday evening, "honey evening" the little boys called it—the children chatted together pleasantly. Martin's story had greatly impressed them.

"Weren't you frightened at first when you saw the big, big doggie, Martin?" said Maudie.

"*Might* have been a woof," remarked Duke, whose ideas had a knack of getting so well lodged in his brain that it was often difficult to get them out again.

"But there *are* no wolfs. I told you so before," said Maudie.

"No," said Duke, "you toldened Hoodie so. You didn't tolden me."

"Well, *dear* Duke, what does it matter?" said Magdalen, with a slight touch of impatience in her tone. "You heard me say it, and you do go on and on so about a thing."

Hoodie looked up with a twinkle in her eyes.

"Peoples always calls each other 'dear' whenever they doesn't like each other," she remarked.

Maudie flashed round upon her.

"That isn't true. I do like Duke—don't I, Duke? And Hec too—don't I love you dearly, Hec and Duke?"

The two little boys clambered down from their chairs, by slow and ponderous degrees, and a hugging match of the three ensued.

"Children, children," cried Martin, "you know it's against the rules for you to get down from your chairs at tea. Miss Maudie, dear, you shouldn't encourage it."

"But Hoodie said unkind 'sings to Maudie, and we had to kiss dear Maudie," said the little boys. "Naughty Hoodie," and they glanced round indignantly at Hoodie.

A hard look came over Hoodie's face.

"Always naughty Hoodie," she muttered to herself. "Nobody loves Hoodie. Nebber mind. Don't care."

"Little boys," said Martin, "you must go back to your seats and finish your tea. And don't call Miss Hoodie naughty for nothing at all but a little joke."

Hoodie gave a quick glance at Martin.

"Martin," she said, gravely, "if there is no woofs now, is there any grandmothers?"

"Any grandmothers, Miss Hoodie?" repeated Martin. "How do you mean, my dear? of course every one has a grandmother, or has had."

"Oh!" said Hoodie; "I didn't know. And is grandmothers always in cottages?"

"Oh, you silly girl," said Maudie, laughing; "of course not. Don't you remember *our* grandmother? She was here two years ago. But I suppose you're too little to remember."

"Don't laugh at her for not understanding, Miss Maudie," said Martin; "besides, don't you remember your grandmother's address is Parkwood Cottage? Very likely she's thinking of that."

"Yes," said Hoodie, "I was 'sinking of zat. I want a grandmother in a cottage. Grandmother in a cottage would be very kind, and there is no woofs."

"Oh no, Miss Hoodie, there are no wolves," said Martin; "all the wolves were sent away long, long ago. Now, dears, you must have your hands washed and your hairs brushed to go down to the drawing-room."

Hoodie was very quiet that evening. Her father noticed it after the children had gone up to bed again, and said to her mother that he was in hopes the child was going to turn over a new leaf. And her mother replied with a smile that she had been speaking to her very seriously that morning, and was glad to see how well the little girl had taken it. So both father and mother felt satisfied and happy about the child, little imagining the queer confused whirl of ideas at that very moment chasing each other round her busy brain.

For Hoodie did not go to sleep till much later than the others, though she lay so still that her wakefulness was unnoticed. Under her pillow, wrapped up firstly in a piece of newspaper, over that in the clean pocket-handkerchief Martin had given her for church, were three biscuits she had got at dessert, two pieces of bread-and-butter, and one of bread and honey, which unobserved she had "saved" from tea. What she meant to do with these provisions was by no means clear, even in her own mind. She only knew that the proper thing was to have a basket

of eatables of some kind, provided for a voyage of discovery such as that on which she was resolved.

"The little Hoodie-girl in the picture has a bastwick, and Martin had a bastwick when she was a Hoodie-girl," she said to herself dreamily. "I will get more bead-and-butter to-morrow and then I can go. After dinner-time Martin wented when she was a Hoodie-girl. I will go after dinner-time too. The grandmother in the cottage will love Hoodie and there is no woofs. Peoples here doesn't love Hoodie."

And so thinking she fell asleep.

The next morning happened to be rainy. Hoodie ate her breakfast in silence, and what she did *not* eat she quietly added to the contents of the pocket-handkerchief parcel. Martin noticed her fumbling at something, but thankful for the quiet state of the atmosphere—otherwise Hoodie's temper—thought it wiser to make no remarks. For after all it was a very April sort of sunshine; and two or three times before dinner there were signs of possible storms—once in particular, when the little boy had got Prince up into the nursery to play with them and Hoodie insisted on turning him out.

"Him's not to come in here," she said; "Hoodie won't have him in here no more."

"*Really*, Hoodie," said Maudie, "this isn't all your room. Why won't you let poor Prince come in? It was only yesterday you were crying because he wouldn't come."

"'Cos I loved him yesterday and I don't love him to-day," replied Hoodie coolly.

"And how would you like if people spoke that way to

you?" said Maudie virtuously. "Suppose we said we wouldn't have you in the nursery 'cos we don't love you to-day?"

"Don't care," said Hoodie. "You can't send *me* out of the nursery. I'm not a dog. But if I like I can go of my own self," she added mysteriously. "And if peoples don't love me I *sall* go."

Maudie did not catch the sense of the last few words, but Prince, being in his own mind by no means partial to the nursery, where the children's affection expressed itself in clutches and caresses very unsettling to his nerves, had taken advantage of the discussion to go off "of his own self," and in the lamentation over his running away, no more was said, and it was not till afterwards that the elder girl remembered her little sister's threat.

But through dinner-time the hard, half-sullen look stayed on Hoodie's face, and again poor Martin shivered with fear that another storm was coming. Somewhat to her surprise things got no worse—not even when a message came up-stairs from "mother," that Maudie was to be ready to go out a drive with her at two, did Hoodie's rather curiously quiet manner desert her.

"I don't care. Nobody loves me," she repeated to herself, but so low that no one heard her.

"It'll be your turn next time, you know, Hoodie dear. Mother never forgets turns," said Magdalen consolingly, as, arrayed in her "best" white alpaca trimmed with blue, and white hat with blue feathers to match, she ran into the nursery to say good-bye to the stayers-at-home.

"And Miss Hoodie will be good and help me with the little boys, won't you, Miss Hoodie dear?" said Martin. "There's some ironing I do want to get done for your Mamma this afternoon, if I could leave you three alone for a little."

"Susan may stay with them," said Mrs. Caryll, who just then came into the nursery to see if Maudie was ready. "It is too damp still for the boys to go out, but Hoodie can play in the garden a little. She never catches cold and she will be the better for a run—eh, Hoodie?"

No answer. Mrs. Caryll turned to Martin with a question in her face. "Anything wrong again?" it seemed to say.

Martin shook her head.

"I think not, ma'am," she said in a very low voice, "but really there's no saying. But I think she'll be all right once you're started with Miss Magdalen."

Mrs. Caryll said no more. She took Maudie by the hand and left the nursery, only nodding good-bye to the little boys as she passed through the doorway.

"Good-bye, darlings," said Maudie. "I'll bring you back something nice for tea."

"Dood-bye, dear Maudie," called out Hec and Duke in return. Then they flew—no, I can hardly use that word with regard to their sturdy little legs' trot across the room—they trotted off to the window to see the carriage as it passed the corner of the drive and to kiss their little hands to Mamma and Maudie. And Hoodie remained determinedly looking out of the other window, from which no drive and no carriage were to be seen.

"Nobody calls me darling. Nobody cares for Hoodie," she said to herself. "Nebber mind. Hoodie will go far, far."

When Martin called to her a few minutes afterwards, to put her hat and jacket on for the run in the garden, which her mother had spoken of, she came at once, and stood quite still while her nurse dressed her. The submission struck Martin as rather suspicious.

"Now Miss Hoodie, my dear," she said, "you'll not go on the grass or where it's wet. Just run about on the nice dry gravel for half an hour or so, and if you see the gardener about, you may ask him to show you the rabbits."

Hoodie looked up in Martin's face with a rather curious expression.

"I won't run in the grass," was all she said. Martin let her go off without any misgiving. For all Hoodie's strange temper she was in some ways a particularly sensible child for her age. She was quite to be trusted to play alone in the garden, for instance—she might have been safely left within reach of the most beautiful flowers in the conservatory without any special warning; not one would have been touched. She was truly, as Martin said, a strange mixture and contradiction.

She had made her way half down the staircase, when she suddenly remembered her basket.

"Oh, my bastwick," she exclaimed. "I was nearly forgetting my bastwick," and up-stairs again she climbed to the cupboard, in one dark corner of which she had hidden it. Luckily it was still there; no one

had touched it; so feeling herself quite equipped for the journey, Hoodie walked out of the front door, crossed the gravel drive, and made her way down a little path with a rustic gate at the end leading straight out on to the high road. When she got there she stood still and looked about her. Which way should she go? It had turned out a beautiful afternoon, though the morning had been so stormy. The road was nearly dry already, the sky overhead was blue, save here and there where little feathery clouds were flying about in some agitation; it might rain again before night, for though not exactly cold, there was no summer glow as yet, and the sunshine, though bright, had a very April feeling about it.

Hoodie stood still and looked about her, up and down the road. It was a pretty, peaceful scene—the broad well-kept highway, bordered at one side with beautiful old trees just bursting into bloom, and across, on the other side of the low hedge, the fresh green fields, all the fresher for the morning's rain, in some of which already the tender little lambkins were sporting about or cuddling in by the side of their warm woolly ewe-mothers.

"I wish I was a lamb," thought Hoodie, as her glance fell on them. Then as she looked away beyond the fields to where in the distance the land sloped upwards into softly rising hills, a flight of birds attracted her attention. How prettily they flew, waving, now upwards, now downwards, like one long ribbon against the sky. "Or a little bird," she added. "If I was up there I could see so nicely where to go, and I could fly, fly, till I got to the sun."

But just then the sound of wheels coming near brought her thoughts down to earth again. Which

way should she go?

She *must* pass through a wood. That was the only thing that at present she felt sure of, and there was a wood she remembered some way down the road, past Mr. Bright's farm. So down the road Hoodie trotted, her basket firmly clasped in her hand, her little figure the only moving thing to be seen along the queen's highway. For the cart to which the wheels belonged had passed quickly—it was only the grocer from the neighbouring town, so on marched Hoodie undisturbed. A little on this side of farmer Bright's a lane turned off to the left. This lane, Hoodie decided, must be the way to the wood, so she left the road and went along the lane for about a quarter of a mile, till, to her perplexity, it ended in a sort of little croft with a stile at each side. Hoodie climbed up both stiles in turns and looked about her. The wood was not to be seen from either, but across a field from the second stile she saw the tops of some trees standing on lower ground.

"That must be the wood," thought Hoodie, and down she clambered again to fetch her basket which she had left on the other side. With some difficulty she hoisted it and herself up again, with greater difficulty got it and herself down the steps on the further side, and then set off triumphantly at a run in the direction of the trees she had seen.

So far she was right. These trees were the beginning of a wood—a pretty little wood with a tiny stream running through the middle, and little nests of ferns and mosses in among the stones and tree-stumps on its banks—a very pretty little wood it must be in summer-time with the trees more fully out and the ground dry and crisp, and clear of the last year's

leaves which still gave it a desolate appearance. Hoodie's spirits rose. She was getting on famously. Soon she might expect to see the grandmother's cottage, where no doubt the kettle would be boiling on the fire to make tea for her, and the table all nicely spread. For already she was beginning to feel hungry; she had journeyed, it seemed to her, a very long way, and more than once she eyed her basket wistfully, wondering if she might eat just one piece of the bread-and-butter.

"The little Hoodie-girl in the picture didn't, and Martin didn't," she said to herself. "So I 'appose I'd better not. And perhaps if the woofs saw me eating, it would make them come."

The idea made her shiver.

"But Maudie said there was no woofs," she added. "Maudie said there wasn't no woofs. But I *wish* I could see the cottage."

On and on she made her way,—here and there with really great difficulty, for there was no proper path, and sometimes the big tree-stumps were almost higher than her fat, rather short legs could either stride across or climb over. More than once she scratched these same bare legs pretty badly, and but for the resolution which was a strong part of her character, the queer little girl would have sat down on the ground and burst into tears. But she struggled on, and at last, to her delight, the trees in front of her cleared suddenly, and she saw before her a little hilly path surmounted by a stile. Hoodie clapped her hands, or would have done so but for the interference of the basket.

"Hoodie's out of the wood," she said joyfully, "and up

there perhaps I'll see the cottage."

It happened that she was right. When she reached the stile, there, sure enough, across another little field the cottage, *a* cottage any way, was to be seen. A neat little cottage, something like the description Martin had given of *her* grandmother's cottage, which, jumbled up with the picture of long ago Red Riding Hood the first, on the nursery walls, was in Hoodie's mind as a sort of model of that in quest of which she had set out on her voyage of discovery. This cottage too had a little garden with a path up the middle, and at each side were beds, neatly bordered, which in summer-time no doubt would be gay with simple flowers. Hoodie glanced round the little garden approvingly as she made her way up to the door.

"It's just like Martin's cottage," she thought. "But the Hoodie-girl in the picture was pulling somesing for the door to open and I don't see nosing to pull. I must knock I 'appose. I am *so* glad there's been none woofs."



It's just like Martin's cottage

Knock—knock—no answer. Knock, knock, *knock* a little louder this time. Hoodie began to wonder if the grandmother was going to be out, like the one in Martin's story—no—a sound at last of some one coming to open.

CHAPTER III.

LITTLE BABY AND ITS MOTHER.

"Polly put the kettle on,
And let's have tea."

The latch was lifted from the inside, and there stood before Hoodie—not an old woman with either "big" or little eyes, not a "grandmother" with a frilly cap all round her face, such as she had been vaguely expecting, yet certainly not a "woof" either! The person who stood in the doorway smiling down on the little girl was a very pretty and pleasant-looking young woman, with a fresh rosy face and merry eyes, and a sleeping baby in her arms!

For the first moment Hoodie was too surprised to understand what she saw.

At last, "I want my grandmother," she said. "*You* aren't my grandmother. I thought this was her cottage."

The young woman smiled again.

"No, Missy, you must have made a mistake. But *your* grandmother doesn't live in a little cottage like this, Missy, I'm sure. You must have quite come out of your road. Whose little lady are you?"

Hoodie shook her head.

"I want to live with my grandmother," she replied. "I

don't want to be anybody's little lady. I've come such a long way—I know the cottage should be aside a wood, just like this. And I'm *so* tired and firsty."

The quiver in her voice told that the self-control was coming to an end. The young woman's sympathy awoke at once.

"Poor dear," she said. "Tired, of course you must be tired. Come in, dearie, and sit you down, and you shall have something to drink and to eat too, if you please. What would you like?" she went on, after she had established Hoodie on a funny little arm-chair by the fire—a chair bought last fair-day by her husband in his extreme delight at being the possessor of a fortnight old baby—"what would you like, Missy—a cup of milk—or some tea? Kettle's boiling, and 'tis just upon tea-time."

"What a nice little chair," said Hoodie, making the observation that first came into her head before replying to the questions asked her, as was a habit of hers. "What a nice little chair! It just fits me," turning her fat little body—to confess the truth, a rather tight fit—and the chair about together, like a snail congratulating itself on its shell.

"Yes, Missy, and you're the first as has ever sat in it. It's to be for baby, the dear, as soon as she's old enough to sit up in it. But about what you'd like to drink, Missy?"

"I were going to tell you," said Hoodie, with a touch of her usual authoritative manner. "I were going to tell you. I'd like tea—proper tea on a table, 'cos I've got my bicsits and 'sings in my bastwick, and we could put them out nicely. And if it's so far away to my grandmother's perhaps I'd better stay here and

fancy you're her"—she glanced up in the young woman's face with such a queer, half-puzzled, half-comical look in her eyes that her new friend really began to wonder if the child was quite "right" in her head—"it would seem more like it, if we had proper tea on a table. But asides that, I'm so firsty I'd like a cup of milk first—just cold milk belone you know, to take away the firsty. Martin *sometimes* gives me a drink of milk like that just afore tea when I'm very firsty, even though she says it spoils my tea."

"But I don't think it'll spoil your tea to-day, Missy," said the young woman, as she fetched the cup of milk. "You've come a long way, you see," she added, with a view to drawing Hoodie out as to her home and belongings.

"And you'll give me *real* tea, won't you, little baby's mother? Not just milk and pertence?" inquired Hoodie, anxiously, as she watched the preparations for the meal.

"Of course, Missy, you must have real tea, as you've come so far to see me. Which way did you come? I don't think I've ever seen you before, but then we've only been here a few weeks, since Thomas engaged with Farmer Bright."

"I didn't come to see you, little baby's mother," said Hoodie, "I came to look for a grandmother in a cottage. But you're very nice, only—oh, do let me hold the little baby!" she exclaimed, seeing that the still sleeping child was about to be deposited in its cradle, as it was rather in its mother's way when lifting the kettle and so on;—"*do* let me hold it!"

She held out her arms and smoothed a place on her knees for it, all ready. "Little baby's mother" had not

the heart to refuse, though somewhat misdoubting but that poor baby would have been better in its cradle. But baby did not seem to think so; she gave one or two funny little yawns, half opened her eyes, and then composed herself to sleep again most philosophically in Hoodie's embrace. She was a nice baby and daintily cared for, even though her home was only a stone-floored cottage. She was number one in the first place, which says a good deal, and she was an extremely healthy and satisfactory baby in herself—and altogether as sweet and fresh and loveable as a wee baby buttercup under a hedge.

The young mother eyed the little couple with great admiration.

"How cleverly she holds it, to be sure!" she said to herself; adding to Hoodie, "You must have a baby at home, Miss, surely?" the remark as she made it reminding her of her anxiety to find out where the "home" of her mysterious little visitor was. "I cannot but give her her tea," she said to herself; "but I hope I sha'n't get into blame for keeping her here, if she's run away from her nurse unbeknown-like."

"No," said Hoodie, with a melancholy tone in her voice. "There isn't no baby at home. Only Hec and Duke, and they're too big to be pettened, and they like Maudie better than me."

"Do they really, Missy!" said the young woman. "Well, I'm sure I think you're a very nice young lady, and baby thinks so too, it's plain to see. See, she's waking, the darling."

Hoodie stared solemnly at the baby as if some extraordinary marvel were about to happen. What did happen was this. Baby stretched itself, doubled

up its little pink fists, as if to box some one, yawned, half opened its eyes, and then closed them again, having apparently considered the question of waking up and thought better of it—rolled over again, and again yawned, and finally opening its nice, baby blue eyes and gazing up inquiringly into Hoodie's face, slowly and deliberately *smiled* at her—a sweet baby smile, half-patronizing, half-mysterious, as if it had been away in some wonderful baby fairy-land which it would have liked to tell her about if it could, and rather pitied her for not having seen for herself. Hoodie gazed, enraptured. A pretty bright smile, a smile, it must be confessed, not too often seen there, broke over her own little face, and at the sight baby's satisfaction expressed itself in a regular chuckle. Hoodie turned to the young woman with a curious triumph.

"Little baby's mother," she said, half awe-struck as it were, "I do believe she *loves* me."

"Of course she does, and why shouldn't she?" replied the young mother heartily, yet feeling conscious of not altogether understanding the little girl. "Why shouldn't she love you, Missy? Little tiny babies like her always does love those as is kind to them. Don't you love your dear mamma, Missy? and your sisters if you have any—and what made you love them first, before you could understand like, if it wasn't that they loved you and were kind to you?"

Hoodie shook her head—her usual refuge in perplexity.

"I don't know," she said. "I like peoples to love me lots—gate lots. I don't 'zink anybody loves me lots. If I was always to sit here holding baby so nice, do you think she'd love me lots?"

Baby's mother laughed outright.

"I don't know that, Missy," she said, "she'd get very hungry and cry. And you'd be hungry, too. Aren't you hungry now? The tea's all ready, see, Missy, and your bread and butter's laid out. But I'm afraid it's rather hard. Won't you have some of mine instead—its nice and fresh. Has yours been packed up a long time?"

Hoodie's attention being drawn to the bread and butter, she allowed baby's mother to regain possession of her treasure, and clambered up herself to the chair placed for her. When safely installed she eyed the provisions suspiciously.

"I 'zink yours is nicer, little baby's mother," she said graciously, having first bitten a piece of her own rather uninviting bread. "It was only packened up last night—but perhaps it was the taking it to bed. I took it to bed acos I didn't want nobody to see. But the bicsits is nice. Mayn't baby have a bicsit, little baby's mother? If I had got to the grandmother's cottage there'd have been cake. You hasn't none cake, has you?"

"No, Missy. You see I didn't know you were coming. If your mamma would let you come another day and I knew in time, I could bake a nice cake."

"Yes," said Hoodie, "and baby might have some. Does baby like cake?"

"She hasn't no teeth to bite it with yet, Missy dear," said the young woman.

"No teess!" exclaimed Hoodie, "what a funny baby. Did God forget zem?" she added, in a lower voice.

The young woman turned away to hide her laughter;

and just at this moment there came a rap at the door —a well-known rap evidently, for up jumped the young woman with a pleased face.

"David!" she exclaimed, as she opened the door, "I thought you wouldn't be back till late, or I'd have waited tea."

"I came in to say as I've got to go out again," said the man—a good-humoured looking young labourer —"little baby" had every reason to be good-humoured with such pleasant tempered father and mother!—"I've to drive over to Greenoaks to fetch some little pigs, so I mayn't be in till late. But bless us!" he exclaimed, as he just then caught sight of Hoodie seated in perfect satisfaction and evidently quite at home, at the tea-table, "who ever's this you've got with you, Liz?"

His surprise was so comical that it set "Liz" off laughing again.

"Bless *me* if I can tell you, David," she said. "She's the most old-fashioned little piece of goods I ever came across. But such a nice little lady too, and that taken with our baby! She won't tell me her name nor nothing," and then she went on to describe to David, Hoodie's arrival and all she had said.

David scratched his head, as, half hidden in the doorway, where Hoodie had not yet caught sight of him, he glanced at the child, still deeply interested in her "tea."

"It's my opinion," he said solemnly, as if what he was about to say was something that could not possibly have struck any one else; "it's my opinion as her nurse or some one has been cross to her and she's

runned away."

"But what shall we do?" said Mrs. Liz, a little anxiously. "How shall we find out where she belongs to?"

"Oh, easy enough," said David. "She's but a baby. And even if she wouldn't tell, you may be sure they'll soon be sending after her. I could take her home on my way to Greenoaks if I knew where it was. Can't be far off—maybe it's one of the clergyman's children down by Springley."

"They've none so little," said Mrs. David. "But there's Squire Caryll's—I heard say there's a sight o' little ones there. 'Twill be there."

"Likely enough," said David. "But I'd like a cup o' tea, Liz, if the young lady'll excuse my being rather rough like."

Lizzie laughed.

"She's but a baby," she said; and so David came forward and sat down at the table.

Hoodie looked up from her tea and stopped half way through a "bicsit" to take a good stare at the new comer.

"Who is zou, please?" she said at last.



"Who is zou, please?"

David looked rather awkward. It was somewhat embarrassing to be calmly challenged in this way at his own table, poor man, by a mite of a creature like this! He relieved his feelings by a glance at his wife and a faint whistle.

"Well, to be sure!" he exclaimed.

Lizzie understood the small questioner better.

"Why, Missy," she said, "'Tis David. He's baby's father, and this is his house, and he's very pleased to see you here."

Hoodie looked again at David; this time he seemed to find more favour in her eyes.

"At the grandmother's cottage there wouldn't have been no Davids," she remarked. "His hands is rather dirty, isn't they, little baby's mother?"

This was too much for David—he went off into a roar. Hoodie looked up doubtfully—was he laughing at *her*?—in her opinion, an unpardonable crime—but David's funny, good-natured face gained the day, and after a moment's hesitation Hoodie joined in the fun and laughed too, though at what she certainly didn't know.

Friendly feeling thus established, David thought it time to begin his inquiries.

"Hope you've enjoyed your tea, Miss," he said. "You must a been hungry after such a long walk. Round by Springley way was it?"

"*What* did you say?" said Hoodie, opening her eyes. David's tone and accent were puzzling to her.

"He says, was it round by Springley way you came, Missy—the way the church is?"

"Oh no, not the church way. I comed srough the wood and past Farmer Bright's. Home is not the church way," said Hoodie unsuspiciously.

David and his wife nodded at each other. "Squire Caryll's," whispered Lizzie.

"I'll be passing that way in the cart," said David. "Would you like a ride, Miss?"

Hoodie shook her head.

"No," she said decidedly, "I want to stay and nurse baby. May I take her now?" she added, preparing to descend from her chair.

David could not help bursting out laughing again.

"What wages is her to get, Liz?" he inquired.

Hoodie turned upon him indignantly.

"Ugly man," she exclaimed; "you'se not to laugh at me. I don't love you. I love baby—*please* give me baby," she said beseechingly to the young woman. "I'm all zeady," for by this time she was again settled in the little chair and had smoothed a place for baby.

Lizzie good-humouredly laid baby again in her arms.

"Hold her tight, please, Missy," she said, turning towards the door with her husband at a sign from him, and Hoodie sat in perfect content for some minutes till baby's mother returned.

"Has zat ugly man gone?" inquired Hoodie coolly. "I'll stay with you and baby, but I don't like zat man."

"But he's a nice man, Missy," said Mrs. David. "I don't know about his being very pretty, but he's very kind to baby and me, and that's better than being pretty, isn't it, Missy?"

"I don't know," said Hoodie.

After a time, in spite of her devotion, baby's unaccustomed weight made her little arms ache.

"When does baby go to bed?" she asked.

Baby's mother seized the opportunity.

"Now, I think," she said. "I'll put her in her cradle for a bit, and then you and I can talk a little.—Don't you think, Missy?" she went on, when baby was safely deposited and Hoodie was free to stretch her tired little arms, "don't you think your poor mamma will be wondering where you are all this time?"

"She's out d'iving in the calliage with Maudie. She won't know where I'm goned," replied Hoodie.

"But your nurse, Missy—*she'll* have missed you?" said Mrs. David.

"We haven't no nurse. We've only Martin," replied Hoodie, "and Martin loves Hec and Duke and Maudie best. She 'zinks Hoodie's naughty. She *always* says Hoodie's naughty."

"Little baby's mother" did not know very well what to reply to this, so she contented herself with a general reflection.

"All little girls are naughty sometimes," she said.

"Yes," said Hoodie, "but not *always*. I'd like to stay here with you and baby, little baby's mother, 'cos baby loves me, if you wouldn't have zat ugly man here."

"But it's his house, Missy. We couldn't turn him out of his own house, could we? And I'm afeared there'd be many things you'd want we couldn't give you? At home you've a nice little room now, all carpeted and

curtained, haven't you? And a pretty little bed all for yourself? We've nothing like that—we've only one room besides the kitchen."

Hoodie did not at once reply. She appeared to be thinking things over.

"I'd *like* to stay," she remarked after a while, "but I'd rather be let alone with you and baby. I don't like zat man. But if you haven't a room for me perhaps I'd better go and look for a grandmother's cottage again, and I'll come and see you sometimes, and baby, little baby's mother."

"Yes, that you must, Missy, and bring little brothers too. You won't think of going off to look for your grandmother again just yet. Perhaps it's quite a long way off by the railway she lives. Couldn't you ask your mamma to write her a letter and tell her how much you'd like to see her?"

"But I want to go to her *cottage*," persisted Hoodie. "I know it is a cottage, Martin said so. I shouldn't want her if she wasn't in a cottage. And I saw it in the Hoodie-girl picture too."

This was getting beyond poor Mrs. David; and finding herself not understood, added to Hoodie's irritation. She was half way, more than half way, fully three-quarters of the way into one of her hopeless crying fits, when fortunately there came an interruption.

Hasty steps were heard coming up the garden path, followed by a hasty knock at the door. And almost before Lizzie could get to open it, two people hurried into the room. They were Martin and Cross the coachman. Hoodie looked up calmly.

"Has you come to fetch me?" she inquired. "I didn't *want* to go home, but little baby's mother hasn't got enough little beds, but I'm going to come back here again. I *will*, whatever you say."

Well as Martin knew the child, this was a degree too much for her. To have spent between two and three hours in really terrible anxiety about the little girl; to have had to bear some amount of reproach for not having sooner discovered Hoodie's escape; to have rushed off to fetch her on receiving the joyful news from the young labourer as he drove past Mr. Caryll's house, her heart full of the tenderest pity for her stray nursling who she never doubted had somehow lost her way,—all this had been trying enough for poor Martin. But to be met in this heartless way by the child—before strangers, too—to be coolly defied beforehand, as it were—it was too much. It was a toss-up between tears and temper. Unfortunately Martin chose the latter.

"Miss Hoodie," she exclaimed, "you're a naughty, ungrateful little girl, a really naughty-hearted little girl—to have upset us all at home so; your poor mamma nearly ill with fright, and then to meet me like that. Speaking about not wanting to come home, and you will and you won't. I never heard anything like it. And to think of all the trouble you must have given to this—this young woman," she added, turning civilly enough, but with some little hesitation in her manner, to Mrs. Lizzie, as if not *quite* sure whether she did not deserve some share of the blame.

Poor Lizzie had stood a little apart, looking rather frightened. In her eyes Martin was a dignified and important person. But now she came forward

eagerly.

"Trouble," she repeated, "oh dear no, ma'am. Little Miss hasn't given me one bit of trouble, and nothing but a pleasure 'twould have been, but for thinking you'd all be put out so about her at home. But you'll let her come again some day when she's passing, to see me and baby. She's been so taken up with the baby, has Missy."

Martin hesitated. She wanted to be civil and kind—Mrs. Caryll had expressly desired her to thank the cottager's wife for taking care of the little truant, and Martin was by nature sensible and gentle, and not the least inclined to give herself airs as if she thought herself better than other people. But Hoodie's behaviour had quite upset her. She did not feel at all ready to reply graciously to Lizzie's meek invitation. So she stood still and hesitated. And seeing her hesitation, naughty Hoodie darted forward and threw her arms round Lizzie's neck, hugging and kissing her.

"I *sall* come to see you, I will, I sall," she cried. "Never mind what that naughty, ugly 'sing says. I *will* come, dear little baby's mother."

Martin was almost speechless with indignation. Poor Lizzie saw that she was angry, yet she had not the heart to put away the child clinging to her so affectionately, and David's words "perhaps her nurse is cross to her at home," came back to her mind. Things might really have become very uncomfortable indeed, but for Cross, the coachman, who unexpectedly came to the rescue. He had been standing by, rather, to tell the truth—now that the anxiety which he as well as the rest of the household had felt, was relieved—enjoying the scene.

"Miss Hoodie's a rare one, to be sure," he said to himself, chuckling quietly. But when he saw that Martin was really taking things seriously, and that the young woman too looked distressed and anxious, he came forward quietly, and before Hoodie knew what he was doing he had lifted her up with a spring on to his shoulder, where she sat perched like a little queen.

"Now, Miss Hoodie," he said, "if you'll be good, perhaps I'll carry you home."

Hoodie, though extremely well pleased with her new and exalted position, was true to her colours.

"*Carry* me home, Coss," she said imperiously; "hasn't you brought the calliage for me?"

"No, indeed I haven't," replied Cross; "little Misses as runs away from home can't expect to be fetched back in a carriage and pair. I think you're very well off as it is. But we must make haste home—just think how frightened your poor mamma has been."

Hoodie tossed her head. Some very naughty imp seemed to have got her in his possession just then.

"Gee-up, gee-who, get along, horsey," she cried, pummelling Cross's shoulders unmercifully with her feet. "Gallop away, old horse Coss, gee-up, gee-up. Good night, little baby's mother, I *sall* come back;" and Cross, thankful to get her away on any terms, turned to the door, humouring her by pretending to trot and gallop. But half way down the little garden path Hoodie suddenly pulled him up, literally pulled him up, by clasping him with her two arms so tightly round the throat that he was nearly strangled.

"Stop, stop, horsey," she cried, "I haven't kissed the

baby. I must kiss the baby."

Even Cross's good nature was nearly at an end, but he dared not oppose her. He stood still, very red in the face, with some muttered exclamation, while Hoodie screamed to Lizzie to bring out the baby to be kissed, perfectly regardless of Martin's remonstrances.

And in this fashion at last Hoodie was brought home —Martin walking home in silent despair alongside. Only when they got close to the lodge gate Hoodie pulled up Cross again, but this time in much gentler fashion.

"Let me down, Coss, please," she said, meekly enough, "I'd rather walk now."

And walk in she did, as demurely and comfortably as if she had just returned from an ordinary walk with her nurse.

"Was there ever such a child?" said Martin to herself again.

And poor Cross, as he walked away wiping his forehead, decided in his own mind that he'd rather have the breaking in of twenty young horses than of such a queer specimen as little Miss Hoodie.



Poor Cross

CHAPTER IV.

MAUDIE'S GODMOTHER.

"If you'd have children safe abroad,
Just keep them safe at home."

They were all standing at the door—Maudie, Hec and Duke, that is to say, and mother in the background, and farther back still, half the servants of the household. But Hoodie marched in demurely

by Martin's side—nay, more, she had taken hold of Martin's hand. And when Mrs. Caryll came forward hurriedly to meet them, of the two, Martin looked much the more upset and uncomfortable.

"You have brought her back safe and sound, Martin!" exclaimed Hoodie's mother. "Oh, Hoodie, what a fright you have given us! What was she doing? How was it, Martin?"

Martin hesitated.

"If you please, ma'am," she said, "I think I'd rather tell you all about it afterwards. It's not late, but Miss Hoodie *must* be tired. Won't it be as well, ma'am, for her to go to bed at once?"

Mrs. Caryll understood Martin's manner.

"Yes," she said. "I think it will. Say good night to me, Hoodie, and to Maudie and your brothers. And to-morrow morning you must come early to my room. I want to talk to you."

Hoodie looked up curiously in her mother's face. Was she vexed, or sorry, or what? Hoodie could not decide.

"Good night, mother," she said, quietly. "Good night, Hec and Duke and Maudie," and she coolly turned away, and followed Martin up-stairs.

The three other children crept round their mother. She looked pale and troubled.

"Mamma," said one of the little boys, "has Hoodie been *naughty*? Aren't you glad she's come home?"

Mrs. Caryll stroked his head.

"Yes, dear," she said. "Of course I'm glad, *very* glad. But it wasn't good of her to frighten us all so, and I must make her understand that."

"*Of course*," said Maudie, virtuously. "You don't understand, Hec."

"But if we had all kissened Hoodie, she'd have known we were glad she had comed back," said Hec, still with a tone of being only half satisfied.

A shadow crossed Mrs. Caryll's face. Was her little son's instinct right?

"Shall us all go and kissen her now?" suggested Duke in a whisper to Maudie.

"No, of course not," replied Magdalen. "You're too little to understand, and you're teasing poor mamma. Come with me and we'll play at something in the study till Martin comes for you. Don't be unhappy, dear mamma," she added, turning to kiss her mother. "I am sure Hoodie didn't mean to vex you, only she is so strange."

That was just it—Hoodie was so strange, so self-willed, and yet babyish, so heartless, and yet so impressionable. A sharp word or tone even would make her cry, and she was sensitive to even less than that, yet seemingly quite careless of the trouble and distress she caused to others.

"My good little Maudie," said Mrs. Caryll, "why should not Hoodie too be a good and understandable little girl?" she added to herself.

And what were the thoughts in Hoodie's queer little brain; what were the feelings in her queer little heart, when Martin had safely tucked her into her

own nice little cot, and, rather shortly, bidden her lie quite still and not disturb her brothers when they came up to bed?

"I wish I had stayed with little baby's mother," she said to herself. "Nobody was glad for me to come home. They is all ugly 'sings. Nobody kissened me. If it wasn't for zat ugly man I'd go back there, I would, whatever Martin said."

"I really think sometimes that there's something wanting in her nature," said Hoodie's mother, sadly, that same evening. She had been listening to Martin's account of the meeting at the cottage, and was now telling over the whole affair in the drawing-room, for Mr. Caryll had only returned home late that evening, as he had been some way by train to meet a visitor who was coming to stay for a time at his house. This was a cousin of his wife's, a young lady named Magdalen King, who occupied the important position of Maudie's godmother. It was some years since Cousin Magdalen had seen the children, but she had so often received descriptions of them from their mother that she seemed to know them quite well. She listened with great interest to the account of Hoodie's escapade.

"She must be a strange little girl," she remarked, quietly.

"Yes," said Mrs. Caryll, "so strange that, as I said, I really think sometimes there is something wanting in her nature."

"Or unawakened," said Magdalen. "I don't pretend to

understand children well—you know I was an only child—but still a little child's nature cannot be very easy to understand at the best of times. It must be so folded up, as it were, like a little half-opened bud. And then children's power of expressing themselves is so small—they must often feel themselves misunderstood and yet not know how to say even that. And oh, dear, what a puzzle life and the world and everything must seem to them!"

"Not to them only, my dear Magdalen," said Mr. Caryll, drily.

"And," said Mrs. Caryll, "it really isn't always the case that children are difficult to understand. None of ours are but Hoodie. There's Maudie now—she has always been a delicious child, and the little boys are very nice, except when Hoodie upsets them. But for her, as she is constantly told, there never would be the least ruffle in the nursery."

"But does it do any good to tell her so?" said Miss King.

Hoodie's mother smiled,

"My dear Magdalen," she said, "wait till you see her. What *would* do her any good no one as yet has found out. She is just the most contradictory, queer-tempered, troublesome child that ever was known."

"Poor little girl," said Maudie's godmother, thinking to herself that a little dog with such a *very* bad name as Hoodie was really not to be envied. She loved her own god-daughter Maudie dearly, and she knew it to be true that she was a very nice child, but her heart was sore for poor cantankerous Hoodie. You see her patience had not yet been tried by her as had been

the patience of all those about the little girl, so after all she could not consider herself a fair judge.

And her first introduction to the small black sheep of the nursery did not, it must be confessed, tend to prove that Hoodie's doings and misdoings were exaggerated.

This was how it happened.

Maudie's godmother was generally an early riser, but this first morning she somehow—tired perhaps with her journey—slept later than usual. She was not quite dressed, at least her pretty curly brown hair was still hanging about her shoulders, when a knock—a lot of little knocks, and then one rather firmer and more decided—came to the door, and in answer to her "Come in," appeared Martin, an old acquaintance of hers, beaming with pleasure, and ushering in her little people, all spick and span from their morning toilet, looking not unlike four rather shy little sheep under the charge of a faithful "colly."

But when Martin caught sight of the young lady in her white dressing-gown and unarranged hair, she drew back.

"Oh, ma'am, I beg your pardon," she said. "My mistress said I might bring them in to see you first thing, as you were always dressed so early, but I can take them back to the nursery till you are ready. They've been worrying to come to you for ever so long."

"And you were quite right to bring them," said Cousin Magdalen, heartily. "Come now, darlings, and let us make friends. I can tell Maudie and Hoodie in a moment of course, but I'm quite in a puzzle as to

which is Hec and which Duke."

"I'm Hec," and "I'm Duke," said the two little boys shyly, nestling up to their new friend as they spoke. She kissed them fondly.

"Dear little fellows!" she said.

"Yes, Cousin Magdalen, aren't they dear little boys? And will you please kiss me too?" said Maudie, in her pretty soft voice.

Magdalen put her arm round her as she did so.

"And Hoodie?" she said. "I must have a kiss from Hoodie too, mustn't I?"

Hoodie stood stock still.

"Come now, Miss Hoodie," whispered poor Martin. All the time she had been dressing the child she had been telling her how good she was to be to Cousin Magdalen, and hinting that perhaps if she behaved *very* nicely it would help to make them all forget the trouble she had caused the day before. But, alas! with what result?

Hoodie stood stock still!

Magdalen put out her hand and tried to draw the child to her.

"You have plenty of kisses on that rosy mouth of yours, Hoodie," she said. "Won't you spare me one?"

Hoodie screwed up her lips tighter than before; that was the only sign she gave of hearing what was said to her.

"*Oh*, Hoodie," said Maudie, reproachfully.

Hoodie turned upon her with a glance of supreme contempt.

"*You* can kissen her," she said; "she's yours, she's not mine. *I* don't want to kissen her."

Cousin Magdalen looked at Maudie for explanation.

"What does she mean?" she said.

Maudie and Martin looked greatly distressed.

"Oh," said Maudie, "it's only about your being my godmother and not hers. We were speaking about it in the nursery, and she said nobody ever gave her anything—like me having you, you know, Cousin Magdalen—and she was vexed, you know," she added in a lower voice, "because she couldn't find our grandmother's cottage yesterday."

"Yes," said Cousin Magdalen, "I know. But, Hoodie dear, you *have* a godmother and a very nice one, as well as a grandmother."

"They're none use having," muttered Hoodie. "I never see them."

"But some day you will. And besides, even though I'm Maudie's godmother, can't I love you too?"

"No," said Hoodie bluntly.

"And won't you kiss me?"

"No," said Hoodie again. "I don't like you. I don't like your hairs. They is ugly, hanging down like that. I don't want to kiss you."

And she turned her back on Cousin Magdalen, and marched quietly to the door.

Martin began some apologies, but Miss King stopped her.

"Never mind, Martin," she said. "It really doesn't matter. She will get to know me better in a little."

But all the same, Cousin Magdalen, being, though very amiable and sensible, only human, *did* feel hurt by the little girl's rude repulse. It is never pleasant to be repulsed by any one; it is, I think, to even right-feeling people, particularly hurting to be repulsed by a *child*. And then Magdalen had been thinking a great deal about this poor little Hoodie that nobody seemed able to manage, and planning to herself various little ways by which she hoped to win her confidence, and thus perhaps be of real service to the child, and through her to her mother.

"And now," she said to herself, "she has evidently taken a prejudice to me at first sight. What a pity! Yet," she added, as she brushed out and arranged the long thick brown hair which Hoodie had objected to, "she is only a baby. Perhaps she will like me better when my hair is fastened up. I must try her again."

The other three children had stayed in their cousin's room—Martin having flown after Hoodie, whom she was now afraid to trust for a moment out of her sight—and while she finished dressing they chattered away in their own fashion.

"Poor mamma's dot one headache zis morning," said Hec.

"Yes," said Duke, "papa comed to the nursley to say Hoodie wasn't to go to be talkened to, 'cos it would make poor mamma's headache worser."

"Won't nobody talken to Hoodie zen?" said Hec.

"Don't be silly, Hec dear," said Maudie, "of course mamma mustn't talk to her when her head's bad. Papa said to Martin that she must not let Hoodie out of her sight, but that he couldn't have mamma bothered about it any more, and that it would be better to drop the subject. What does it mean to 'drop the subject,' Cousin Magdalen? I thought perhaps it meant to put down the lowest bar on the gate at the end of the garden, where Hoodie sometimes creeps through to the cocky field. Could it be that?"

"No," said Magdalen, turning away so as to hide her face, "it just means not to say any more about Hoodie's running away yesterday, because it has troubled your mother so much."

"Of course," said Maudie. "It is all that that has given her a headache. It is nearly always Hoodie that gives her headaches. I wonder how she *can*."

"But, Maudie dear," said her godmother very gently, "do you think it is quite kind of you to speak so? It is right to be sorry when Hoodie is naughty, but remember how much younger she is than you. And she does not *want* to make your mother ill—when she is naughty she just forgets all but the feelings she has herself, but that is different from *wishing* to hurt her mother."

Maudie grew very red.

"Yes," she said in a low voice, "I see how you mean, Cousin Magdalen. I don't want to say unkind things of Hoodie."

"No, dear. I don't think you do," said her godmother. "Tell me why do you call that field 'the cocky field'?"

Maudie laughed.

"Oh, it's because in one corner of it there's the little house papa's made for the bantam cocks. Oh, Cousin Magdalen, they are *such* ducks."

"*Such* ducks," echoed Hec and Duke. "And they lay such lovely eggs."

"What remarkable creatures they must be," said Miss King. "But I must own I don't quite see how they can be *ducks* if they're cocks and hens."

All the children laughed.

"They isn't zeally ducks," explained matter-of-fact Duke, condescendingly. "But, you see, we calls zem ducks 'cos zey is so nice and pretty."

"Ah yes, I see," said Cousin Magdalen, gravely. "So perhaps when you know me better, if you think me *very* nice, you'll call me a duck. Will you, Duke? Even though really, you know, I'm an old woman."

"Yes," said Duke, "p'raps I will. But I didn't know zou was a *old* woman."

"Didn't you, you dear old man?" said his cousin, laughing. "Never mind, you may call me 'a old duck,' if you like. And after breakfast will you take me to see these wonderful bantams—that's to say if you're allowed to go there."

"Oh yes," said Maudie. "We may go whenever we like. They're so tame—indeed, they're too tame, papa says, and that was why he made them a place further away from the house than they used to be. They used to come and hop about all the rooms, and once they laid an egg on one of the library arm-chairs, and another time in papa's paper basket. They thought

that was a lovely nest."

"And are they better behaved now?" said Miss King.

"Oh yes, only sometimes they lay astray. So papa gives us a penny if we find any of their eggs about the field or in the hedges anywhere," said Maudie. "That's what makes Hoodie so fond of going in the cocky field. She's far the cleverest at finding eggs. You should see her—and she's got such a way with the cocks. She can cluck, cluck them close up to her, and often she catches them. They're not a bit afraid of her."

"How funny," said Magdalen, not sorry to see Maudie's childish attempt at saying something in praise of her little sister. "I must certainly go with you to see the bantams after breakfast."

"Timmediate after breakfast!" said Hec. "Will you come timmediate? For after zen Maudie has lessons."

"Yes," said Maudie, "I have lessons. Miss Meade comes from Springley to give me lessons."

"And doesn't Hoodie have any?"

"Sometimes," replied Maudie. "When she's in a good humour. When she's not, it's no use trying. I heard Miss Meade say so one day, and so now Hoodie very often says she's in a bad humour whether she is or not, 'cos she doesn't like lessons."

"She *says* she's in a bad humour," repeated Magdalen, astonished.

"Oh yes, she just calls out to Miss Meade, 'oh, one's come, one's come,' that means a bad humour's come, and once she says that, *nothing's* any good. She sometimes puts her fingers in her ears if Miss Meade

tries to speak to her. So mamma settled it was no good doing anything; it did so interrumpt *my* lessons, and I'm getting big, you know. But please, Cousin Magdalen, will you come with us just the very minute after breakfast, and then there'll be time?"

"Very well," said Magdalen. "I'll be ready 'timmediate,' I promise you."

Whether or no Miss King knew much about children, she knew enough to understand that to them a promise, even about a small matter, is a very sacred thing. And she took care not to forfeit their confidence. No sooner did the four little figures appear on the lawn just outside the dining-room window, than she started up from the table where, though breakfast was finished, she was loitering a little in pleasant talk with her friends.

"Why, where are you off to, in such a hurry?" said Mrs. Caryll.

"I beg your pardon," said Magdalen, laughing. "I promised the children to go with them before their governess comes, to—"

"Excuse my interrupting you," said Mr. Caryll, "but I would just like to see if I can't finish the sentence for you. I am certain they are going to take you to see the bantams, now aren't they? They have all four, Hoodie especially, got bantams on the brain."

He opened the glass-door as he spoke, and Miss King passed through. Three of the children ran forward joyously to meet her, the fourth followed more slowly, and from her way of moving, Cousin Magdalen strongly suspected that either "one" had just come, or that "one" had not yet gone. There was

a decidedly black-doggy look about her fat little shoulders.

But Miss King took no notice, and slowly, very slowly, the fourth little figure drew nearer to the others. Still she did not speak—the boys chattered merrily, and Maudie joined in, being sensible enough to understand that just now, at any rate, the taking no notice plan was the most likely to bring Hoodie round again.

And by the time they reached "the cocky field," it was crowned with success. Hoodie forgot all her troubles in the pleasure of showing off her pets, and greatly distinguished herself by the cleverness with which she caught them and brought them up, one after the other, to be admired.

"Isn't they *sweet*?" she said, ecstatically; "when I'm big, I'll have a house with lots and lots of cocks and hens."

"I thought you were going to live in a cottage, like Red Riding Hood's grandmother, when you're big?" said Maudie, thoughtlessly.

Hoodie turned upon her with a frown, and Cousin Magdalen felt really grieved to see how in one instant her pretty, round, rosy face lost its childlike expression, and grew hard and fierce.

"You's not to laugh at me," she said. "I won't have nobody laugh at me."

Maudie looked up penitently in Cousin Magdalen's face.

"I'm so sorry. I *didn't* mean to set her off. Truly I didn't," she whispered.

Cousin Magdalen felt that she knew and understood too little to attempt the interference she would have liked to use. More than interference indeed. For the moment she felt so provoked with Hoodie's naughty, silly bad temper, that she really felt ready to give her a severe scolding. She was too wise to do so, however, and certainly it would have done no good. More for Maudie's sake than for Hoodie's, she tried to turn the conversation in a pleasant way.

"It is very queer," she said, "that people almost never do when they are grown up what they plan as children. When I was little I always planned that I should do nothing but travel, and after all, very few people have travelled less than I. I have been very stay-at-home."

"I like travelling a little way," said Maudie; "but when it is a long way, it is so tiring."

"Wouldn't you like the magic carpet that flew with you wherever you wished to be?" said Cousin Magdalen.

"Was it in a fairy story?" said Maudie; and though Hoodie said nothing, she came slowly nearer and stood staring up in Miss King's face with her queer baby blue eyes that could look so sweet, and could, alas! look so cross and angry.

"Yes," said Cousin Magdalen, in reply to Maudie's question, "in a very old fairy story. Are you fond of fairy stories?"

"*I* is," said a voice that was certainly not Maudie's.

Magdalen turned to her quietly.

"Are you, dear?" she said, as if not the least surprised

at her joining in the conversation. "And you too, Maudie? And Hec and Duke?"

"Oh yes, very," said Maudie. "Of course Hec and Duke don't like difficult ones—there's some kinds that keeps meaning something else all the time, and they are rather difficult, aren't they?"

"Yes," said Magdalen, smiling. "I like the old-fashioned ones that don't mean anything else. I must try to think of some for you."

Maudie clapped her hands, and Hoodie's face grew very bright. Suddenly she gave a little spring, as if a new idea had struck her.

"I've zought of some'sing," she cried, and turning to Miss King,

"Does you like eggs?" she inquired.

"Very much," said her cousin.

"Zen, if you'll tell us stories, I'll get you eggs. Kite, kite fresh. Doesn't you like them *kite* fresh?"

"Yes, quite fresh; they can't be too fresh," said Magdalen.

"Can't be too fresh," repeated Hoodie. "Zat means just the moment minute they'se laid. Oh, that'll be lovely. And when'll you tell us some stories, please?"

"Let's see," said Cousin Magdalen. "I'll have to think, and thinking takes a good long while."

"Nebber mind," said Hoodie. "You'll zink as soon as you can, won't you, dear?"

And for the rest of the morning's walk she was perfectly angelic, in consequence of which Cousin

Magdalen felt more completely puzzled by her than ever.

The day passed over pretty smoothly. Late in the afternoon, just as the children were preparing for a run in the garden before tea, an excitement got up in the nursery by the absence of Hoodie's basket, which she insisted on taking out with her.

"My bastwick; oh my bastwick," she cried. "I must have my bastwick."

"What do you want it for, Miss Hoodie?" said Martin. "There'll be no time for picking flowers, and we're not going up the lanes."

"Oh, but I must have my bastwick," repeated Hoodie.

Martin, fearful of an outbreak, stood still to consider.

"When did you have it last?" she said. "Now I do believe it was yesterday at that cottage, and I brought it home for you. Yes, and I put it down in the back hall where your hoops are. Now, Miss Hoodie, if you'll promise to be very good all the time you're out, you may run and fetch it. I'll be after you with the little boys in five minutes."

Hoodie was off like a shot, but the five minutes grew into ten before Martin and the boys followed her; an ill-behaved button dropping off Hec's boot while the careful nurse was fastening it.

"And if there's one thing I can't abide to see, it's children's boots wanting buttons," she said, "so run down, Miss Maudie, there's a dear, and take care of your sister till I come."

Maudie ran down, but as she did not return Martin felt no misgivings, and she was greatly surprised and

disappointed when, on going down-stairs, she was met by the child with an anxious face.

"I couldn't find Hoodie in the back hall or anywhere about there," she said, "and I ran out a little way into the garden, because I knew you'd be so frightened, but I can't see her."

"Oh dear, dear," said poor Martin, "wherever will she have gone to now? Take the boys into the study, Miss Maudie dear, for a few minutes, and I'll run round by the lodge, and ask if they have seen her pass. If she's gone up the wood to that cottage again they must have seen her. Dear me, dear me, I might have thought of it when she teased so about her basket."

Off rushed Martin, and Maudie, faithful to her charge, kept watch over the little boys. They were not kept waiting very long, however. In two minutes Martin put in her head again.

"Is she with you, Miss Maudie?" she said, quite breathless with running so fast, "No? Oh dear, where *can* she be? The woman at the lodge says she saw her running back to the house a few minutes ago. She is sure she did."

"Perhaps she's gone up to the nursery again," said Maudie.

"Oh no," said Martin, "she'd never go there, once she thinks she's escaped again. She's got something new in her head, I'm sure. I'll just ask in the servants' hall if any of them have seen her."

She left the room to do so, but as she passed by the foot of the stairs she heard a step. There, calmly coming down, was Hoodie, without her basket,

however. But that, in her delight at recovering her truant, Martin did not notice.

"Miss Hoodie, Miss Hoodie," she cried, "where *have* you been? You've given me such a fright again. Where *have* you been?"

"Up in the nursley," said Hoodie, coolly. "I wented out a little, and then up-stairs to the nursley."



"Up in the nursley," said Hoodie coolly

And with this account of her doings Martin was obliged to be content.

CHAPTER V.

STORIES TELLING.

"This is the cock that crowed in the
morn."

Late that night, no, very early the next morning, just as dawn was breaking, the peacefully sleeping inhabitants of Mr. Caryll's house were awakened by strange and alarming sounds which seemed to come from the direction of the nursery. The children's mother was one of the first to wake, and yet the sounds which had roused her having been heard indistinctly through her sleep, she was not able to say what they were.

"It must be one of the children with croup—I am sure it sounded like what I have heard croup described, or like that dreadful illness they call the crowing cough," she said to Mr. Caryll, as she rushed out of the room in a fright.

She had only got to the end of the long passage leading to the children's rooms when she ran against Miss King, closely followed by her maid and one, two, three other servants all pale and alarmed.

"What can it be?" each said to the other.

"Martin, Martin," cried Mrs. Caryll, "are you there? What *is* the matter?"

But before any Martin was to be seen, again the sounds shrilled through the house.

"Kurroo—kurallarrallo-oo-*ook!*" with a queer sudden sort of pull-up at the end, it seemed to sound.

They all turned to look at each other.

"It must be a real cock," said Miss King, looking less frightened.

"It certainly doesn't sound like croup," said Mrs. Caryll.

"It's just one of them mischievous bantams, ma'am," said the cook, a countrywoman who had made a study of cocks and hens. "They always give that sort of catchy croak at the end of their crows. But, to be sure, what a fright it's gave us all! And where can the creature be?"

As she spoke, Martin appeared at the end of the passage, a basket in her arms, her face pale, leading by the hand a small figure in a white nightgown, a figure that pulled and pushed and kicked valiantly in its extreme reluctance to come any farther.

"I won't be takened to Mamma. I won't, I won't. I'm not naughty. It's zou that's ugly and naughty," it screamed.

Mrs. Caryll gave a despairing glance at her cousin.

"Hoodie again!" she said.

Martin hastened forward as fast as she could,

considering the difficulties in her way.

"Oh, ma'am," she exclaimed, looking nearly ready to cry, "I am so sorry, so sorry and ashamed to have such an upset in the house at this time of the night, or morning, I should say. It really must seem with all these troubles as if I wasn't fit to manage the children. And just as Miss King has come, too. But oh dear, ma'am, I don't know *what* to do with Miss Hoodie and her queer ways."

"But what *is* it, Martin? What has Hoodie been doing?" said Mrs. Caryll, rather impatiently. "Stop crying, Hoodie. You *must*," she added sternly, turning to the little girl, who was now regularly set agoing on one of her roars.

Hoodie took not the slightest notice, but roared on. Her mother turned again to Martin, shaking her head.

"No, ma'am," said Martin, "it's not the least use speaking to her. She has wakened all the others, of course—first with that nasty creature and then with her screaming."

"What nasty creature? For goodness' sake explain yourself, Martin."

"The cock, ma'am—the bantam cock," replied Martin, seeming quite astonished that Mrs. Caryll did not know all about it by instinct. "Miss Hoodie fetched it in in her basket, unbeknown to me, last night, and had it hidden under her bed. The creature was quite quiet all night, as is its nature, I suppose, and very likely frightened and not knowing where it was. But this morning all of a sudden it started the most awful screeching; it really sounded much worse than

common crowing, or else it was hearing it half in one's sleep like. I thought, to be sure, one of those dear boys had got some awful fit. And to think it was nothing but Miss Hoodie's naughtiness—real mischievous naughtiness." Martin stopped, quite out of breath, and Hoodie's roars increased in violence.

"Had she really no reason for it but mischief?" said Miss King.

Martin hesitated.

"She did begin some nonsense, ma'am, about having brought it in to lay an egg, or something like that."

"Hoodie," said Magdalen, "can't you leave off screaming and tell us about it?"

"No," said Hoodie, stopping at once and with perfect ease, "I can't leave off sc'eaming, and I won't. But I'll tell zou, 'cos it was for zou. I brought the little cock in to lay a egg for zour breakfast, 'cos zou said zou likened zem kite fresh, and now Martin's spoilt it all. Of course it c'owed to tell me it was going to lay the egg, and now it won't. It's all spoilt, and I *must* sc'eam."

True to her determination she set to work again and roared so that it was almost impossible to hear one's voice.

"What *shall* we do with her?" said her mother.

"May I take her to my room?" said Cousin Magdalen. "It is farther away from the other children, so she can't disturb them even if she screams all day."

Hoodie stopped again as suddenly as before.

"I won't go to zour room," she said. "I don't like zou

now—not one bit."

Magdalen glanced at Mrs. Caryll.

"May I take my own way with her!" her glance seemed to say. Mrs. Caryll nodded her head, and notwithstanding Martin's whispered warning, "Oh, Miss King, you don't *know* what a work you'll have with her," Magdalen turned to Hoodie, and before the child in the least understood what she was about, she had picked her up in her strong young arms and was half way down the passage before Hoodie's surprise had given her breath to begin her roars again.

She was opening her mouth to do so, when her cousin stopped for a moment.

"Now, Hoodie," she said, "*listen*. It was kind of you to want to get me a quite fresh egg for my breakfast, but it isn't kind of you at all to make that disagreeable noise, and to kick and fight so because I want to take you to my room."

"I don't care," said Hoodie, "I don't like zou, and I will cry if I like. I don't like any people."

"I am very sorry to find you are so silly," said Cousin Magdalen. "If you were older and understood better you would not talk like that."

"I would if I liked," persisted Hoodie. "Big peoples can do whatever zey likes, and if I was big I could too."

"Big people *can't* do whatever they like," said Miss King, "and nice big people never like to do things that other people don't like too."

"Don't zey?" said Hoodie, meditatively. By this time

they were safely shut into Miss King's room and Hoodie was plumped down into the middle of her cousin's bed—"Don't zey? Zen I don't want to be a nice big people. I want to be the kind that does whatever zey likes zerselves."

Miss King gave a slight sigh—half of amusement, half of despair. She was beginning to understand that Hoodie's reformation was indeed no easy matter.

"Very well, then. You had better go on screaming if you like it so much," she said, sitting down on the side of the bed and wondering to herself what would become of the world, if all the children in it were as tiresome to manage as Hoodie. In at the window the daylight was creeping timidly; all kinds of pretty colours were to be seen in the sky, and the birds were beginning their cheerful chatter. Still it was very early, and poor cousin Magdalen was sleepy. Was there *anything* that could make Hoodie go to sleep for an hour or two?

"The little birds in the nests are kind to each other. They don't wake each other up in the night and scream so that there is no peace. I wonder why children can't be good too," she said.

"I'm *not* sc'eaming," said Hoodie indignantly. "I've stoppened."

"I'm glad to hear it. But if I get into bed and lie down and try to go to sleep, perhaps you'll begin again, as you don't care for what other people like."

Hoodie was silent for a minute.

"Does you want to go to sleep?"

"Yes," said Magdalen. "I'm very tired."

"Zen I won't sc'eam."

Her cousin felt inclined to clap her hands, but wisely forbore.

"Thank you," she said quietly, as she lay down.

Hoodie wriggled.

"No, zou isn't to say zank zou," she said. "I don't like zou. I don't like any people, 'cos they stopped my getting zat nice fresh egg. I won't get zou eggs no more. I don't like zou."

"Very well," said her cousin.

Some minutes' quiet followed. Then Hoodie's voice again.

"When will zou tell us that story?" she inquired coolly.

"What story?"

"Zat story about oldwashion fairies, or some'sing like zat."

"Oh, I said I'd try to think of a story for you," said Miss King, sleepily. "Well, I won't forget."

"Zou must get it ready quick," said Hoodie. "Zou must tell it me, zou know, 'cos I've been so good about not sc'eaming."

"But not now. You don't want me to tell you stories *now*," said her cousin in alarm.

"No, zou may go to sleep now," replied Hoodie, condescendingly, adding after a moment's pause, "*I* can tell stories, lovely stories."

"Can you? well, you had better think of one, and have it all ready," said Magdalen in fresh alarm.

"Mine's is always zeady, but zou may go to sleep now," was the reply, to her great relief, the truth being that Hoodie herself was as sleepy as she could be, for in two minutes her soft even breathing told that for a while her fidgety little spirit was at rest.

Magdalen lay awake some time longer. In a half-dreamy way she was thinking over in her own mind the old fairy tales she had loved as a little girl—with them there mingled in her fancy the scenes and memories of her own childhood. She was glad to find Hoodie so eager for stories, it might be one way of winning the strange-tempered little creature's confidence, and she tried to call to mind some of the tales most likely to interest her. And somehow, "between sleeping and waking," there came back to her mind the shadow of a fanciful little story she had either read or heard or imagined long ago, and as she fell asleep she said to herself, "Yes, that will do. I will tell them the story of 'The Chintz Curtains.'"

When Magdalen awoke again that morning it was, as might have been expected, a good deal later than usual. Hoodie was still sleeping soundly. Magdalen got up and dressed quietly. She was nearly quite ready when Hoodie awoke. A little movement in the bed caught Miss King's notice: she turned round. There was Hoodie, staring at her with wide-open eyes.

"Well, Hoodie," she said, "how are you this morning?"

Hoodie did not reply, but continued staring, so her cousin went on fastening up her hair. In a minute or two there came a remark, or question rather.

"Has zou had a nice sleep?"



"Has zou had a nice sleep?"

"Yes, thank you."

"Has zou thinkened of a story?"

"Yes," said Magdalen. "I almost think I have."

"*I* has too," said Hoodie, with a queer twinkle in her eyes.

"Have you," said her cousin, "that's very clever of you."

"Yes," replied the little girl, "zou didn't know Hoodie was so c'ever, did zou?"

"You'd better tell me the story first, and then I'll say what I think of it," said Magdalen.

"Now?" inquired Hoodie, "sall I tell it now? It isn't a long one."

"If you like," replied Magdalen, "you can tell it me while I finish doing my hair."

"Well," began Hoodie, solemnly, "just a long time ago —oh no, that's a mistake, it should be just '*onst*—'"

"Or 'once,'" corrected her cousin, "'once' is a proper word, and 'onst' isn't."

"I don't care," said Hoodie, frowning. "I like to say 'onst.' If zou don't zink my words pretty you'll make one come, and if one comes I can't tell you stories."

"Very well," said Magdalen, remembering Maudie's explanation of the mysterious phrase, "very well. I won't interrupt you. You may say any words you like."

"Well then," began Hoodie again. "*Onst* there was a little girl. She was called—no, I won't tell zou what she was called—she had a papa and mamma and bruvvers and a sister, but zey didn't like her much."

She stopped.

"Dear me," said Magdalen, finding she was expected

to say something, "that was very sad."

"Yes," said Hoodie, "vezy sad."

"Why didn't they like her?"

"'Cos zey thoughtened she was naughty. Zey was alvays saying she was naughty."

"Perhaps she was," said Magdalen.

"Nebber mind," said Hoodie, "I want to go on. One day a lady comed what wasn't *hern* godmozer, so she didn't like her, and she toldened her she was ugly. But zen—oh zen she founded out that she wasn't ugly but she was pretty, vezy, vezy pretty—oh, she was so nice, and the little girl liked her vezy much—wasn't zat a nice story?"

"Beautiful," said Miss King. "All except the part about her papa and mamma and sister and brothers not liking her. I don't like that part."

"Nebber mind," replied Hoodie again. "Nebber mind about zat part zen. Doesn't zou like about the lady? Can zou guess who it was?"

"Let me see," said Magdalen, solemnly. "I must think. A lady came that wasn't *her* godmother—dear me, who could it be?"

"It was zou; it was zou," cried Hoodie, jumping up in bed and rushing at her cousin. "And the little girl was Hoodie, 'cos I do like zou now. I do, I do, and I'll be vezy good all day, to please you."

"That's my dear little girl," said Cousin Magdalen, really gratified. "But won't you try to be good to please your papa and mamma too—and most of all, Hoodie dear, to please God."

She lowered her voice a little, and Hoodie looked at her gravely.

"I don't know," she said. "I couldn't try such a long time and zey *alvays* says I'm naughty. No, I'll just please zou; nobody else, and if zou aren't pleased, I'll sc'eam. I can sc'eam in a minute."

Magdalen grew alarmed.

"Please don't," she said. "I'll be very pleased if you don't. And when you see how nice it is to please me, perhaps you'll go on trying to please everybody."

Hoodie shook her head.

"Zey *alvays* says I'm naughty," she repeated.

Just then there came a knock at the door, and Martin put her head in.

"Is Miss Hoodie awake yet, ma'am?" she inquired. "And I do hope she's let you have some sleep?"

"Oh, yes indeed, thank you, Martin," said Miss King, cheerfully. "We have got on *very* well, haven't we, Hoodie? And I think you are going to have a very good little girl in the nursery to-day."

"I hope so, I'm sure, ma'am," said Martin, rather dolefully. Her tone did not sound as if her hopes were very high, and Hoodie's next remark did not make them higher.

"Yes," she said, "I is going to be good—vezy, vezy good, *too* good. But it isn't to please zou, Martin. It's all to please *her*," pointing to Miss King, "and not zou, one bit. 'Cos I like her; she didn't scold me about the cock—she zanked me, and she's going to tell me a story."

"Hoodie," said Magdalen gravely, "I don't call it beginning to be good to tell Martin you don't care to please her one bit."

"Can't please ev'ybody," said Hoodie, with a toss of her shaggy head; "takes such a long time."

"But speaking that way to Martin doesn't please *me*," persisted Magdalen.

"Very well zen, I won't," said Hoodie, with unusual amiability. "I'll give Martin a kiss if you like. Only you must have the story ready the minute moment Maudie's done her letsons—will zou?"

"Yes," said Magdalen, "it'll be quite ready."

So Hoodie went off triumphantly in Martin's arms, things looking so promising that by the time they reached the nursery, the two were the best of friends.

And, "what a nice little young lady you might be, Miss Hoodie," said Martin, encouragingly, "if you was always good."

Magdalen was ready for the children as she had promised. It was such a mild beautiful day, though only April, that she got leave to take them out-of-doors for the story-telling, and in a favourite corner, sunny yet sheltered, they settled their little camp-stools in a circle round her and prepared to listen.

"Only," said wise Maudie, "if Hec and Duke get very tired they may run about a little, mayn't they, Cousin Magdalen?"

"If even they get a *little* tired they may run about,"

said her godmother. "But I don't think they will. It is a sort of nonsense story, not clever enough to tire any of you."

"What's it called, please?" said Maudie.

"I'm not sure that it has a name," said Magdalen, "but if you'd rather it had one, we'll call it 'The Chintz Curtains.'"

"Please begin then, and say it in very little words for Hec and Duke to understand, won't you?"

Magdalen nodded her head, and began.

"Once," she said, "once there was a little girl."

"That's how my story began," said Hoodie, with the funny twinkle in her eyes again.

"Never mind, *don't* interrumpt," said Maudie.

"Well," Magdalen went on, "this little girl had no brothers or sisters, and though her father and mother were very kind to her she was sometimes rather lonely. And she often wished for other children to play with her. It happened one winter that she got ill —I am not sure what the illness was—measles, or something like that, it wasn't anything very, very bad, but still she was ill enough to be several days quite in bed, and several more partly in bed, and even after that a good many more before she could get up early to breakfast as usual, and do her lessons and run about in the garden, and play like *well* children. She didn't much mind being ill, not as much as you would, I don't think. For, you see, except just for the few days that she felt weak and giddy and really ill, staying in bed didn't seem to make very much difference to her, indeed in some

ways it was rather nicer. She had lots of storybooks to read—several of her friends sent her presents of new ones—and certainly more dainty things to eat than when she was well—"

"Delly?" said Hec. "Duke and me had delly when we was ill."

"Yes," said Maudie, "last winter Hec and Duke had the *independent* fever, and they had to have jelly and beef-tea and things like that to make them strong again."

"Yes," said Magdalen, "that was why Lena—I forgot to tell you that that was the little girl's name—that was why they gave all those nice things to little Lena. But the worst of it was she didn't like them nearly as much as when she was well, and she often wished they would give her just common things, bread and butter and rice-pudding, you know, when she was ill, and keep all the very nice things for a treat when she was well and could enjoy them. She was getting well, of course; by the time it comes to thinking about what you have to eat, children generally are getting well; but she was rather slow about it, and even when she was up and about again as usual, she didn't *feel* or look a bit like usual. She was thin and white, and whatever she did tired her. Something queer seemed to have come over all her dolls and toys; they had all grown stupid in some tiresome way, and when she tried to sew, which she was generally rather clever at, all her fingers seemed to have turned into thumbs."

"How dedful," said Hoodie, stretching out her two chubby hands and gravely gazing at them. "All zumbs wouldn't look pretty at all. I hope mine won't never be like that if I get ill."

"My dear Hoodie," said Magdalen, as soon as she could speak for laughing. "I didn't mean it that way. Not *really*. I just meant that her fingers had got clumsy, you know, with her being weak and ill. It is just a way of speaking."

"Oh!" said Hoodie, rather mystified still, "I'm glad them wasn't *zeally* all zumbs."

"Only, Hoodie, I *do* wish"—began Maudie, but Magdalen went on before she had time to finish her sentence.

"And as the days went on and she didn't seem to be getting back to be like herself, her mother grew rather anxious about her.

"'We must do something about Lena,' she said to her father, 'she is not getting strong again. The doctor says she should have a change of air, but I don't see how to manage it. I cannot leave home while my mother is so ill,'—for Lena's grandmother lived with them and was rather an old and delicate lady—'and you, of course, cannot.'

"Lena's father was always very busy. It was seldom he could leave home, not very often, indeed, that he had time to see much of his little girl, even at home. But he was very fond of her, and anxious to do everything for her good. So he and her mother talked it well over together, and at last they thought of a good plan, and when it was all settled her mother told Lena about it.

"She called her to her one day when the little girl was sitting rather sadly trying to amuse herself with her dolls. But her head ached, and all her ideas seemed to have gone out of her mind. She could not

think of any new plays for them, and she began to fancy their faces looked stupid.

"'I almost think I'm getting too big for dolls,' she was saying to herself, when she heard her mother's voice calling her. And she slowly got down from her chair and went up-stairs to the drawing-room, where her mother was sitting writing.

"'Are you very tired, dear?' she said kindly.

"'Yes, mamma, I think so,' said Lena, as if she didn't much care whether she was tired or not.

"'You seem often tired now, my poor little girl,' said her mother. 'I think it is that you have not got properly strong since you were ill. The doctor says a change of air would be the best thing for you, but just now neither your father nor I can leave home. Would you mind very much going away for a little without us?'

"'Would it be very far, mamma?' said Lena. She liked the idea of going away, she had not often left home, and she had a great fancy for travelling, but still you can understand to go quite away without either her father or mother seemed rather lonely."

"Hadn't she a nice nurse?" asked Maudie.

"No, she hadn't a nurse quite all for herself. She was the only child, you know, and her father and mother were not very rich people, so the maid who waited on her had other work to do too. Her mother went on to explain to her that it was not to any very far-away place they thought of her going. It was to a pretty little sheltered village near the sea, where in an old-fashioned farmhouse there lived a very kind old woman who had been her mother's nurse long

before Lena was born. Lena had seen her two or three times and liked her very much, and Mrs. Denny, that was the old nurse's name, had often told her about her pretty home where she lived with her son, who had never married, and for many years had taken care of this farm for the gentleman it belonged to. Mrs. Denny had promised Lena that if she came to see her she should have as much new milk as she could drink, and plenty of quite fresh eggs, and all sorts of nice country things. She had also promised her a particular bedroom all to herself—and Lena had forgotten none of these things, so that when her mother told her that it was to Rockrose Farm they were thinking of sending her, Lena, in her quiet way, felt quite pleased. She was not a little girl that made a fuss about things—she had lived too much alone to be anything but quiet—and just now she felt too tired to seem very eager. But her mother was pleased to see the bright look that came into her eyes, and to hear the cheerful sound in her voice when she replied, 'Oh, if it is to Mrs. Denny's, mamma, I should like to go *very* much. And I wonder if she will let me sleep in the room where the bed has such beautiful chintz curtains, all covered with pictures, mamma?'

"Her mother smiled.

"'I daresay she will, dear,' she said. 'I'm just writing to nurse now, and if you like I'll ask her to be sure to let you have the bedroom—with——'"

CHAPTER VI.

"THE CHINTZ CURTAINS."

"O lovely land of fairies,
You are so bright and fair."

"The chintz curtains."

Cousin Magdalen stopped for a minute.

"Are you getting tired, dears, any of you?" she said.

All the four heads were shaken at once.

"Oh dear no," said Maudie.

"In course not," said Hoodie.

And "It's a vezy pretty story," said Hec; while Duke faintly echoed, "Vezy pretty."

So Magdalen, thus encouraged, went on.

"You begin to understand now why I said you might call the story 'the chintz curtains,'" she said. "We're now got like to the real beginning. At least I needn't explain any more about Lena—you must just fancy her arriving one afternoon at Rockrose Farm. It was a nice bright afternoon, though the winter was scarcely over, and little Lena already began to feel stronger and better when she ran out into the garden at one side of the house for a breath of fresh air after the long drive from the railway. Her father had brought her to the station, and there Mrs. Denny had met her, so that he might go straight back by the next train without losing any time.

"'Oh, how nice it is,' she said to Mrs. Denny, as she

stood in the middle of the little grass-plot beside the old sun-dial, and felt the sweet fresh air blowing softly over her face. 'How pretty the garden must be in summer.'

"'Yes, my dear,' said Mrs. Denny. 'The flowers are very sweet. It seems to me there never were such sweet ones. And do you hear that sort of soft roar, Miss Lena? Do you know what that is?"

"Lena stood quite still to listen, and a pleased look came over her face.

"'Yes,' she said, 'I believe it is the sea. It is like far-away organs, isn't it?'

"'And sometimes in stormy weather it is like great cannons booming,' said Mrs. Denny.

"But just then it was difficult to think of storms or cannons, or anything so unpeaceful. Nothing could seem more perfectly calm and at rest than that dear old garden the first time Lena ever saw it. I don't think anything (any place perhaps I should say) can be more delicious than a little nest of a place like Rockrose, sheltered from the high winds by beautiful old trees, and yet open enough for the sea breezes to creep and flutter about it, and sometimes even to give what Lena called 'a salty taste' to the air, if you stood with your mouth open and got a good drink of it. But I mustn't go on talking so much about the outside of the house, or I never shall get to the inside, shall I?

"Well, after Lena had admired the garden, and promised herself many nice runs in it, Mrs. Denny took her into the house again. They passed through the kitchen, which had a little parlour out of it,

where already tea was set out—it was such a delicious old kitchen, the paved floor as white and clean as constant scrubbing could make it, and the old cupboards and settles of dark wood shining like mirrors—they passed through the kitchen and across a little stone hall with whitewashed walls, out of which opened the best parlour, only used on very grand occasions, and up two flights of stone steps ending in a wide short passage running right across the house. At one end of this passage Mrs. Denny opened a door, which led into a sort of little ante-room, and here another rather low door being opened, Lena followed Mrs. Denny into the bedroom which was to be hers. It was not a very little room—there were two windows, one at each side—one of them looked out on to the garden, the other had a lovely view far away over the downs, to where one knew the sea *was*, though one could not see it. But fond as Lena was of pretty views, she did not run to the window to look out. She stood still for a moment and then ran forward eagerly to the end of the room, where the bed was placed, crying out with delight,

"'Oh, that's the bed—that's the very bed you told me about, dear Mrs. Denny—the bed I did so want to sleep in. Thank you so much for remembering about it. Oh, how *beautiful* it is—I shouldn't mind being ill if I was in that bed.'

"It really was a rather wonderful bed. It was a regular four-poster, if you know what that is—a bed with wooden posts at each corner, and curtains running all round, so that once you were inside it, you could if you liked draw them so close that it was like being in a tent."

"I know," said Maudie, "I've seen beds like that. But I

don't think Hoodie and the boys have—let me see; oh yes, I can tell them what it's like. It's like the bed in our *best* doll-house—the one with pink curtains trimmed with white. You know?"

"Yes," said Hoodie, "the one where Miss Victoria has been so ill in, since she's got too ugly to sit in the drawing-room. I know."

"But it's such a weeny bed," said Hec, "was zour little girl no bigger than zat little dolly, Cousin Magdalen?"

"*Of course*," said Maudie, hastily. "How stupid you are, Hec."

"Maudie," said her godmother, and Maudie got very red. "Maudie meant it was the same *shape* as that, but much bigger, Hec dear. Just the same as the piano in the study is the same shape as the one in the doll-house, only much bigger."

"Oh zes," said Hec.

"A great deal bigger than any of the beds people have now," continued Magdalen. "It was really big enough to have held six little Lenas instead of one. But it was the curtains that made it so particularly wonderful. They were very old, but the colours were still quite bright, they had been washed so carefully. And the pattern was something I really could not describe if I tried—it was the most delicious muddle of flowers, and trailing leaves and birds, and here and there a sort of little basket-work pattern that looked like a summer-house or the entrance to a grotto.

"Lena stood feasting her eyes upon these marvellous curtains.

"'I never did see anything so nice,' she said. 'Can I see the pictures when I'm *in* the bed, Mrs. Denny?'

"'Oh yes, my dear, they're double—the same inside as out,' said Mrs. Denny, turning them as she spoke.

"'How nice!' said Lena; 'well, if I'm late for breakfast, Mrs. Denny, you'll know that it'll be with looking at the curtains.'

"'I'm not afraid but that you'll sleep well in this bed, Miss Lena,' said the old nurse. 'There's something very lucky about it. Many a one has told me they never had such sweet sleep or such pretty dreams as in our old bed. It's maybe that the room is a very pleasant one, never either too hot or too cold, and there's a beautiful scent of lavender, Miss Lena, all through the bed, as you'll find.'

"Lena poked her little nose into the pillows on the spot.

"'Oh yes,' she said, 'it's *beautiful*.'

"'But you must be, or any way you should be, hungry, my dear,' said nurse. 'And tea's all ready. Come away down-stairs, and then you must go to bed early, you know. I must take great care of you, so that you'll look quite a different little girl when you go home again.'

"Lena did justice to the tea, I assure you. She thought she had never enjoyed anything so much before as the nice things Mrs. Denny had got ready for her. And after tea there was her little box to unpack, and her things to arrange neatly in the old-fashioned bureau and on the shelves of the large light closet, opening out of the room. And by the time all this was done Lena began to feel both sleepy and tired,

and was not at all sorry when Mrs. Denny told her that she thought it was quite time for her to go to bed.

"And oh how very comfortable she felt when she was fairly settled in the dear old bed! It was *so* snug—just soft enough, but not too soft—not the kind of suffocatingly soft feather-bed in which you get down into a hole and never get out of it all night. It was springy as well as soft, and though the linen was not perhaps so fine as what Lena was accustomed to at home, it was real homespun for all that—and through everything there was the delicious wild thymy sort of scent of lavender which Mrs. Denny had promised her. Lena went to sleep really burrowing her nose, which was rather a snub one to begin with unfortunately, into the pillow, and the last words she thought to herself were, 'I could really fancy myself in a sort of fairy-land. And oh how nice it will be in the morning to lie awake and look at those lovely curtains.'

"There was not so very much lying awake however the first morning as she had expected. It was so late when she awoke that the sun was quite a good way up in the sky, and Mrs. Denny was standing by the bed smiling at her little visitor, and wondering if she would have to make fresh bread and milk for her, as the bowlful that was ready would be quite spoilt with waiting so long. Up jumped Lena.

"'Oh, dear Mrs. Denny,' she said, 'I have had such a beautiful, lovely sleep. And you don't know what funny dreams I had. I dreamt that there were fairies hidden in all the little crinks of the curtains, and I heard them talking about me and telling each other that it was the first time I had slept there, and they

wondered if I was a good little girl. And then I thought I heard one say "if she is good we can please her well." *Wasn't* it funny, Mrs. Denny?'

"'Very funny,' said Mrs. Denny, smiling. 'But you know, Miss Lena, I told you you'd have beautiful sleeps and dreams here, didn't I?'

"'Yes,' said Lena, 'and I'm *so* hungry, you don't know how hungry I am.'

"So she jumped up and washed and dressed and said her prayers, and came down to the kitchen as fresh and bright as a little girl could look. And Farmer Denny declared, if the roses in the gardens had been in bloom, he could have thought she had been stealing some for her cheeks—for already there was certainly more colour in them than when she had arrived. So the time passed very happily, and Lena did not feel the least dull either by day or by night.

"It had not been the time of the full moon when she first came, but a few days later it happened to be so, and as the weather was beautifully fine just then there were almost no clouds in the sky, and the moon had it all her own pretty way. One night Lena woke up suddenly—it seemed to her that she had been asleep a long, long time, and she didn't feel the least heavy or confused, but quite fresh and brisk as if she had had all the sleep she needed. And the shining moonlight came pouring in at the windows in a sort of wide band of light falling right across the bed and showing out most beautifully the colours and patterns on the old-fashioned curtains. They looked even brighter than by daylight, and as Lena lay and looked at them, she saw wonderful new pictures that she had never noticed before—the sort of pathway between the green branches and foliage

that seemed to lead up to one of the little bowers or grottos grew more distinct, and as Lena tried to trace it out with her eyes, she suddenly saw a little figure moving along the path she was looking at. She rubbed her eyes and looked again—the figure had disappeared, but instead she saw clearly in the moonlight two butterflies flitting about the same path, darting first backwards, then forwards, as if inviting her to follow them.

"'If only I were a fly and could walk straight up a wall,' thought Lena, 'I'd really step up that curtain and see if I couldn't make my way into that grotto,' and then she laughed to herself at the fancy—'as if any one *could* walk into a picture!' she said.

"And then it seemed to her that the butterflies melted into the leaves—and there was no movement at all on the curtains.

"'It must have been the trembling of the moonlight that made me fancy it,' Lena said to herself. And the next morning when she awoke she stood up on tiptoe to examine the particular spot where she had seen these curious things. It looked just the same as the other parts of the curtains—only half hidden among the bushy leaves near the rustic doorway that Lena called the arbour, she found out a queer brown little face that she had not seen before. It seemed to her to peep out at her suddenly, and she fancied that it was the face of the figure she had watched moving along the path in the moonlight.

"'How funny that I never noticed it before,' she said, for when she looked at the same place on the pattern in other parts of the curtains she noticed the same queer little brown face, just like a monkey peeping from among the branches.

"She was so surprised that she thought she would ask Mrs. Denny if *she* had ever noticed 'the monkeys,' but somehow it went quite out of her head. It was not till the next night that she remembered anything more about them.

"For the next night, strange to say, she wakened again in the same sudden way. And again the moonlight was shining right on the curtains, and this time Lena felt more sure than the night before, that something was moving about among the leaves and flowers and branches that seemed to stand out so brightly.

"'Oh dear,' she thought to herself, 'I *do* wish I could creep up quite quietly and see if it is one of those monkeys that has got loose. Oh please, Mr. Monkey, if you are a fairy, *do* come down and fetch me,' she added, laughing.

"But her laughter stopped suddenly. Almost as she said the words the most curious sound reached her ears—at first it seemed like the buzzing of lots and lots of flies, bluebottles, midges, bees, cockchafers—every sort of creature of the kind, so that Lena started up in a fright. But no—no flies of any sort were to be seen, but nearer and nearer, louder and louder came the sound, till at last it grew into a sort of chant, as if a great number of little feet were stepping along together, and a great number of little buzzing voices singing in time to them. And glancing up at the curtains Lena plainly saw a whole quantity of tiny brown figures stepping—you couldn't call it sliding, they moved too regularly—downwards in the direction of her face. And if she had looked closer, she would have seen that every place in the pattern where the wee brown faces peeped out was empty!

The monkeys had come to fetch her! Where to?

"That I must try to tell you—but as to how she got there, that is a different matter. She never knew it herself, so how could any one else know it? All I can tell you is this—she found herself standing in front of a little house—a pretty little house, something like the carved Swiss cottages that your mamma has in the library—there was a garden all round it, thick trees and bushes at the sides, and as Lena suddenly, as it were, seemed to awake to find herself there, she heard at the same moment a sort of scuttling all about her, just as if a lot of hares or rabbits had taken flight. And when she quickly turned round to look, she saw disappearing among the shrubs ever so many—*quantities* of pairs of little brown legs and feet—the bodies and heads belonging to them being already hidden in the green.

"'It must be the monkeys,' thought Lena, and as this came into her mind it struck her too that this place where she found herself was the very place where she had wished to be. Till this moment she had somehow forgotten about it, but now she looked about her with great interest—yes—this cottage must be the very place she had called an arbour, for the fence in front of it was of rustic work like dried branches twisted together, and there at the side was one of the trees with the thick leaves where the monkey's face had peeped out—and at the other side were the plants with the big bobbing red flowers, and the other ones with the hanging yellow lilies—all the things she had noticed so often. Lena had really got her wish. She was *in* the chintz curtains. Only there were no birds, no butterflies, nothing moving at all—no monkeys' faces peeping at her from among the leaves. Everything was perfectly

still.

"'What shall I do?' thought Lena. 'Shall I go into the house and look about me? I wonder if it would be rude.'

"It didn't seem so, for the door was left open—wide open, as if on purpose; so, after knocking once or twice and no one coming, Lena walked in. Such a pretty, but such a queer little house it was. It was more like a nest than a house. There was a little kitchen with cupboards all round, with open lattice-work doors through which you could see what was in them. They were filled with all sorts of queer provisions, nuts, acorns, apples of different kinds, and some fruits that Lena had never seen before. Then in the parlour the carpet was the prettiest you could imagine. Lena could not think what it was till she stooped down and felt it with her hands, and then she found it was moss, real live growing moss, so bright and green, and so soft and springy. And the sofa and chairs were all made of growing plants, twisted and trained so that the roots made the seat and the branches the back. Each was different. Lena sat down in one or two, and could not tell which was the most comfortable, they were all so nice, and so pretty. For each was ornamented with a different flower that seemed to grow in a wreath on purpose round the back and down the arms. There was no fireplace in the room, but there were some nice furry-looking rugs lying about, and when Lena looked at them closely she saw they were made of moss too—moss of a different kind, browner than the other, plaited together in some wonderful way with the soft flowery tufts kept outside. Lena lay down on the sofa and covered herself up with one of these rugs.

"'How comfortable it is! What an awfully nice little house this is!' she said to herself. 'But how I do wish some one would come to speak to me. It feels rather like Silverhair in the Three Bears. Mr. Monkey, if this is your house, please come and speak to me.'

"No sooner had she said this than there stood before her a wee brown figure—brown all over, face, hands, feet and all—only his eyes, which sparkled brightly like beads, were black. He was dressed in a short scarlet jacket, and on his head was a scarlet cap with a long, very long tassel. He took off the cap and bowed low—very low at Lena's feet—the top of his head when he stood upright reached about to her knees, and he bowed so low that his nose nearly touched her toes. Lena felt rather uncomfortable—she was not used to such very great respect, and she felt a little startled to think that she had called out to the little man, as 'Mr. Monkey.' No doubt he was rather like a monkey, but still—



"He took off the cap and bowed low."

"She stood to think of something nice and civil to say, but she could not, try as she might, think of anything better than 'Thank you, sir.'

"It did quite well—the little man seemed quite pleased, for he bowed again as low as before, and in

a clear silvery voice like a little bell he spoke to Lena.

"'What are your biddings, little lady?'"

"'Oh,' said Lena, 'I do so want to see all this funny place. It was very kind of you to bring me up here, but I would like to see it all. May I walk all about your garden, Mr. Mon—oh, I beg your pardon,' she added in a hurry.

"'Never mind,' said the little man. 'One name is as good as another. My brothers and I have been watching you, and we wish you well. If you will come with me I will show you all I can.'

"'Oh, thank you,' said Lena, jumping up in a moment.

"The little man walked out of his house, and standing in front of it he gave a long shrill whistle. Immediately from every direction whole quantities of other little brown men appeared—they seemed to tumble out of every branch of the trees, to peep up out of the ground almost at Lena's feet—till at last she felt like Gulliver among the Lilliputians.

"'Fetch the carpet,' said the first little man, who seemed a sort of commander, and before Lena had time to see where it came from a beautifully bright blue sheet was stretched out before her, held all round by the dozens and dozens of little brown men, as if they were going to shake it.

"'Step on to it, little lady,' said her friend.

"Lena did so, and no sooner had her feet touched it than she felt it rise, rise up into the air, up up, till she wondered where she was going to. Then suddenly, as suddenly as it had begun to move, it

stopped.

"'Where are we?' she said, just then noticing for the first time that her own particular little brown man was sitting at her feet.

"'At the top,' said the little man; 'it would have taken you a long time to climb up here, and we did not want to tire you. Now you shall see our gardens.'

"He jumped off the carpet, and Lena followed him. All the other little men had disappeared, but she hardly noticed it, she was so delighted with what she saw. Before her were beautiful flower paths—paths edged with tall growing flowers of every colour indeed, for they never stayed the same for half a moment, but kept changing like rainbows—melting from one shade into another in the loveliest way, like the coloured lights at the pantomime.

"'Oh, how lovely!' said Lena. 'May I gather some, please?'

"The little man shook his head.

"'You cannot,' he said, walking on before her.

"After a while he turned down another path.

"'These are our birds,' he said; and Lena, glancing more closely at what she had thought were still flowers, saw that they were trees with numberless branches, on each of which sat or perched a bird. They were a contrast to the many-coloured flowers, for each bird was of one colour only, and all the birds on each tree were the same. There was a tree perfectly covered with pure white ones, another with all red, a third all blue, and so on. And the birds swayed gently backwards and forwards on the

branches, in time; though there was no sound, it seemed to Lena like hearing beautiful music. And somehow she did not feel inclined to speak or to ask any questions. She just quietly followed the little man, feeling happier and more pleased than she had ever felt in her life. And soon there came another change. Looking up, Lena saw that all the birds and flowers were left behind, and she was walking through a sort of thicket of leafless bushes. She wondered why they were so bare, when everything else in the brownies' country was so rich and bright.

"'These are our orchards,' said her guide. 'But we keep the fruit packed up till it is wanted. It keeps it fresher. See now!' As he spoke he touched a bush.

"'Grow,' he said, and in an instant there came a sort of flutter over the tree, and then at once there sprouted out all over the branches the most tempting-looking clusters of fruit. They were something like beautiful purple grapes, but richer and more luscious-looking than any grapes Lena had ever seen. And while she was admiring them the little man touched another, and instantly oranges, golden and gleaming like no oranges she had ever seen before, glistened out all over the branches. And the little man stepped on in front, touching the trees as he went, till the whole path was a perfect glow of fruits of every colour and shape. So beautiful were they to look at, that Lena somehow felt no wish to eat them.

"On went the brownie, touching as he went, till suddenly the path came to an end, and Lena saw in front of her a high wall of bright green grass, with steps cut in it.

"'Up here,' said her little friend, 'are our fish-ponds.

Would you like to see them?'

"Lena nodded her head. She was getting quite used to wonderful things, but the more she saw the more she wanted to see. She followed the little man up the steps, and when she got to the top she stood silent with surprise and delight. Of all the pretty wonders he had shown her, what she now saw was the prettiest. Six tiny lakes lay before her, and in each a fountain rose sparkling and dancing. And the fish that were in each lake rose up with the waters of the fountain and glided down them again as if almost they had wings. In each pond the fish were of different colours. There were, let me see, six ponds, did I not say? Yes—well in the first the fish were gold, in the second silver, in the third bronze; and in the three others even prettier, for in them the fish were ruby, emerald, and topaz. I mean they were of those colours, and in the water they gleamed as if they were made of the precious stones themselves. Lena gazed at them in perfect delight, and held out her hands so that the spray from the fountains fell on them, half hoping that by chance some of the fish might drop into her fingers by mistake.

"The little man looked at her and smiled, but shook his head.

"'No,' he said, as if he knew what she was thinking, 'no, you cannot catch them, just as you could not have gathered the flowers.'

"Lena looked disappointed.

"'I would so like to take some of them home,' she said, gently.

"'It cannot be, child,' said the little man. 'They would

have neither life nor colour out of their own waters. There are many, many more things to show you, but I fear the time is over. I must take you home before the moon sets.'

"'But mayn't I come again?' said Lena. She had not time to hear the little man's answer, for again there came the quick rushing sound of the quantities and quantities of little feet, and again a sort of cloudy feeling came over Lena. She tried to speak again to the brownie, but her voice seemed to have no sound, and all she heard was his shrill whistle. It grew shriller and shriller till at last it got to sound not a whistle at all, but more like a cock's crow. And just then Lena opened her eyes, which she did not know were closed, and what do you think she saw? The morning sun peeping in at the lattice-window of her bedroom, and lighting up in its turn, as the moon had done a few hours before, the queer quaint patterns on the old chintz curtains. And down below in the yard Farmer Denny's young cock was busy telling all its companions, and little Lena as well, if she chose to listen, that it was time to be up and about."

Magdalen stopped.

"Is that all?" said Maudie.

Hoodie said nothing, but stared up for her answer.

"I don't know," said their cousin.

"You don't know?" said Maudie. "Cousin Magdalen, you're joking."

"No, indeed I'm not. I really don't know. I daresay there's lots more if I had time to tell it you. The little man told her there were lots and lots more things to

show her."

"Did her ever go back again?" asked Hoodie gravely.

"I hope so—I think so," said Magdalen. "But I don't think she ever went back quite the same way."

Hoodie stared harder. Maudie looked up with a puzzled face.

"Cousin Magdalen," she said, "I believe after all you've been taking us in. There is something in the story that means something else. How do you mean that Lena went back again to the brownies' country?"

"I mean," said Magdalen, "that it was the country of fancy-land—a country we may all go to, if——"

"If what, please?"

"If we keep good and kind and sweet and pretty feelings in our hearts," said Magdalen, slowly, and a little gravely. "But if we let ugly things in—crossness, idleness, and selfishness, and ugly creatures like that —the pretty fairies will never come near us to fetch us away to see their treasures. The brownies would not let untidy or ill-tempered children into their neat little nests of houses. And even if such children *did* get into fairy-land or fancy-land—whichever you like to call it, where there are such numberless beautiful and strange things—it would not be fairy-land to them, because their poor little eyes would be blind, and their poor little ears deaf."

"I think I understand," said Maudie, "and some day perhaps, Cousin Magdalen, you'll tell us some more about Lena."

"Perhaps," said Magdalen, smiling.

But Hoodie said nothing, only stared harder up in her cousin's face with her big blue eyes.

And Hec and Duke, who had been amusing themselves since the story was over and the talking had begun, by sticking daisies on to a thorn, trotted up to Cousin Magdalen to kiss her and say, "Zank zou for the pitty story."



Hec and Duke ... sticking daisies on to a

thorn

CHAPTER VII.

TWO TRUES.

"The little stars are the lambs, I guess,
The fair moon is the shepherdess."

NURSERY SONG.

A few mornings after the story telling in the garden, as Miss King was passing along the passage on her way down to breakfast, she overheard tumultuous sounds from the direction of the nursery. She stopped to listen. Various little voices were to be distinguished raised much higher than their wont, and among them, now and then, Martin's rather anxious tones as if entreating the children to listen to her advice.

"I don't care," were among the first words Cousin Magdalen made out clearly, "there isn't two trues, and what I'm telling is real true *true*, as true as true."

The speaker was Hoodie. Then came the answer from Maudie.

"Hoodie, how *can* you?" she said in a voice of real distress. "I think it's dreadful to tell stories, and to keep on saying they're true when you know they're

not. It wouldn't have mattered if you had explained it was a sort of fairy story like what Cousin Magdalen told us the other day, for of course that wasn't true either, only in a way it was."

"And Hoodie didn't usplain a bit, not one bit," said Duke virtuously. "Her keeped on saying it were as true as true."

"And we is too little to under'tand, isn't we?" put in Hec. "If Hoodie had toldened us she was in fun——"

"But I *wasn't* in fun, you ugly, naughty, *ugly* boy," retorted Hoodie, by this time most evidently losing her temper. "And if peoples 'zinks so much about trues, they shouldn't vant me to say what isn't true about being in fun when I wasn't in fun. The moon *does*——"

A choky sound was now heard, caused by Maudie's putting her hand over her sister's mouth.

"Hoodie, you're *not* to say that again," she exclaimed, no doubt with the best intention, but with an unfortunate result. Hoodie turned upon her like a little wild cat, and was in the act of slapping her vigorously when Miss King hurried into the room.

"*Hoodie!*" she said reproachfully.

Hoodie looked up with a mixture of shame and defiance.

"Oh, Hoodie, I am *so* sorry. I thought you had quite left off everything like that," said her cousin.

One or two big tears crept slowly out of the corners of Hoodie's eyes.

"They shouldn't say I was telling untrue things," she

muttered. "'Tisn't my fault."

"Oh! Miss Hoodie," said Martin, injudiciously, "how *can* you say so? I'm sure, Miss," she went on, turning to Magdalen, "no one said a word to put her out. She was telling fairy stories like, to Master Duke and Master Hec, and they began asking her to explain and she would say it was quite true, not fairy stories at all. And Miss Maudie just tried to show her she shouldn't say that, and then you see, Miss, she flew into a temper."

"What were the stories about, Hoodie?" inquired Miss King, kindly.

Hoodie vouchsafed not a word in reply.

Magdalen glanced at the others.

"*I'll* tell," said Duke. "They was about things up in the sky, you know."

"Angels, do you mean?" said Miss King.

"Oh no, not angels," said Maudie. "It was about the stars and the moon. Hoodie has a fancy——"

"It *isn't* a fancy," put in Hoodie fiercely.

"Hoodie says," continued Maudie calmly, "that the moon and the stars and all of the things up in the sky, know each other, and talk to each other, and that she has heard them. The moon takes care of the stars, she says, and early in the morning when it is time for them all to go away the moon calls to them. I mean Hoodie says she does."

"'Cos she *does*," replied Hoodie, before any one else had time to speak. "She calls to them and they all come round her together, and then they all go away

like a flash—*so* quick, and it is so bright."

Her funny eyes gleamed up into Magdalen's face. In the interest of what she was telling she forgot her temper.

"Was it that that you saw?" asked Magdalen, gravely. "The flash of their going, I mean?"

"Yes," said Hoodie, "I've seen it lots of times, and I try to keep awake on purpose. It passes—the flash, I mean—it passes by the little window near my head. The little window for seeing up into the sky, you know."

Magdalen nodded her head.

"I know," she said, "I had a window like that in my room when I was a little girl, and I was very fond of it. But I don't think I ever saw the moon and the stars saying good night, or good morning—which is it? And are none of the little stars ever left behind?"

The whole of Hoodie's face lighted up with a smile, but the rest of the faces round Miss King looked grave and rather puzzled. Was she really going to encourage Hoodie in her fancies—thought Maudie and Martin?

"I don't *'zink* so," said Hoodie, "but I'll look the next time."

"Cousin Magdalen," whispered Maudie, gently pulling her godmother's dress, "it *isn't* true. You don't want Duke and Hec to think it is."

"I don't think it would matter much if they did," replied Magdalen in the same tone. "Thinking little fancies like that true would do them far less harm than thinking their sister was telling falsehoods. But I

will try to explain to Hoodie that perhaps it is better not to say any more about it to the little boys. Only, Maudie dear, I think you are old enough to understand better that Hoodie was not meaning to tell untruths."

"She said she heard the moon and the stars *talking*," remonstrated Maudie.

"Well—what if she did? Many a time when I was a little girl I have thought I heard the wind say real words when I was lying awake in my little bed. Of course I know better now, but so will Hoodie, and if these fancies please her and keep her content and happy, why not leave her them?"

"*Martin* doesn't think so," said Maudie, rather mortified that her efforts to bring Hoodie to a sense of her wrong-doings were so little appreciated.

"Miss Maudie, dear!" exclaimed Martin, "I never said so, I'm sure. I don't think I rightly understood what it was all about. I'm sure I don't want to be sharp on any of you for fancies that do no one any harm. I had plenty of them myself when I was little."

"You see, Maudie, Martin does understand," said Miss King. "I'll try and explain about it better to you afterwards, but just now I really must hurry down to breakfast."

She was turning away when a clamour of little voices stopped her.

"Won't you come back after breakfast, Cousin Magdalen?"

"Oh, do tum back."

"It's such a wet day and we've nothing to do, 'cause

it's Saturday, and Saturday's a holiday."

"Do you want me to come and give you lessons then?" said Magdalen, mischievously.

Dead silence—broken at last by Duke.

"Couldn't you tum and tell us more stories?"

Magdalen shook her head.

"I haven't got any ready. Truly I haven't," she said. "It takes me a long time to think of them, always. But I'll tell you what we might do. I'll come up after breakfast with my work and you might all tell *me* stories. That would amuse everybody. Each of you try to think of one, but you mustn't tell each other what it is."

Hoodie's face lighted up, but Maudie looked rather lugubrious.

"*I* can't think of one," she said.

"Oh yes you can, if you try," said Magdalen, cheerfully.

"Must it be all out of my own head?"

Miss King hesitated.

"No, if you can remember one that you've read that the others don't know, that would do."

Maudie looked relieved.

"*I* don't need to remember one," said Hoodie. "I know such heaps. My head's all spinning full of them."

"So's mine," said Duke, jumping about and clapping his hands.

"And mine too," said Hec. "Kite 'pinning full."

"What nonsense," said Hoodie. "You *don't* know stories. It's only me that does."

"Hush, hush," said Miss King. "My plan won't be nice at all if it makes you quarrel. Now I *must* run down."

The children were very quiet through breakfast time. Every now and then the little boys leant over across their bowls of bread and milk to whisper to each other.

"Wouldn't that be lovely?" or

"That'd be a vezy pitty story," till called to order by Martin, who told them that spilling their breakfast over the table would not be at all a good beginning to the stories.

"'Twouldn't matter," remarked Hoodie, philosophically. "The cloth isn't clean; it's Saturday, you know, Martin."

"Saturday or no Saturday," replied Martin, "it isn't pretty for little ladies and gentlemen to spill their food on the table. And it gets them in the habit of it for when they get big and have their breakfasts and dinners down-stairs."

"Doesn't big people *never* spill things on the cloth?" inquired Hec, solemnly.

"Mr. Fielding does," said Hoodie. "One day when he was here at luncheon, he was helping Mamma to wine, and he poured all down the outside of her glass. I think he's dedfully ugly. I wouldn't like ever to be a big people if I was to be like him."

"Miss Hoodie," remonstrated Martin, hardly

approving of the turn the conversation was taking, "do get on with your breakfast, and you'd better be thinking about your stories than talking about things you don't understand."

Hoodie glanced at Martin with considerable contempt.

"I'd like to make a story about Beauty and the Beast," she said. "I know who'd be the beast, but *you* shouldn't be Beauty, Martin."

"Shouldn't I, Miss Hoodie?" said Martin, good-naturedly. "Miss King would make a nice Beauty, to my mind."

Almost as she spoke the door opened, and Cousin Magdalen re-appeared.

"Children," she said, "your mother says we may have the fire lighted in the billiard-room because it is such a chilly day, so I am going to take my work there and you may all come. Martin will be glad to get rid of you, because I know Saturday's a busy morning for her always."

The news was received with great satisfaction, and before the end of another half-hour the four children were all under their cousin's charge in the billiard-room, for an hour or two, greatly to Martin's relief.

"What pretty work you are doing, Cousin Magdalen," said Maudie, stroking admiringly the large canvas stretched on a frame at which Miss King was working.

"I am glad you think it's pretty," said her godmother. "I think it is very pretty; but the colours are not very bright, and children generally like very bright

colours. The pattern is copied from a very old piece of tapestry."

"What's tapestry?" said Hoodie.

"Old-fashioned work that used to be made long ago," said Miss King. "It was more like great pictures than anything else, and such quantities of it were made that whole walls were covered with it. Once when I was a very little girl I slept in a room all covered with tapestry, and in the middle of the night——"

She stopped suddenly.

"*What?*" said Hoodie eagerly, peering up into her face. "What came in the middle of night?"

"I didn't say anything came," said Cousin Magdalen, laughing. "I stopped because I thought I could make it into a little story and tell it to you afterwards. But we are forgetting all about your stories. Who is going to begin? Eldest first—you, Maudie, I suppose."

Maudie looked rather melancholy.

"I can't tell nice stories," she said. "I've been thinking such a time, and I can't think of anything except something very stupid."

"Well, let us hear it, any way," said her cousin, "and then we can say if it is stupid or not."

"It was a story I read," said Maudie, "or else some one told it me. I can't remember which it was. It was about a very poor little girl—she was dreadfully poor, just as poor as you could fancy."

"No clothes—hadn't she no clothes?" asked Duke.

"And nucken to eat?" added Hec.

"Very little," said Maudie. "Of course she had some, or else she would have died. She hadn't any father or mother, only an old grandmother, who wasn't very kind to her. At least she was very old and deaf and all that, and perhaps that made her cross. And the little girl used to go messages for a shop—that was how she got a little money. It was a baker's shop near where they lived, and it was rather a grand shop—only they kept this little girl to go messages, not to the *grand* people that came there, you know, but to the people that bought the bread when it wasn't so new—and currant cakes that were rather stale—like that, you know. And on Sunday mornings she had the most to do, because they used to send a great lot of bread very early to a room where a kind lady had breakfast for a great many poor people—for a treat because it was Sunday. They used to have lots of bread and butter and hot coffee—very nice. And Lizzie, that was the little girl's name, liked Sunday mornings and going with the bread to that place, because it all looked so cheerful and comfortable, and the smell of the hot coffee was so good."

"Didn't they never give her none?" asked Duke.

"No, I don't think so. At least not before what I'm going to tell you. You should wait till I tell you. Well, one Sunday in winter, it was a dreadfully cold day; snowing and raining, and all mixed together, and wind too, I think—dreadful cold wind. And Lizzie nearly cried as she was going along to that place. She had such dreadfully sore chilblains on her feet and on her hands too. She got to the place and emptied the basket, and she was just coming away at the door, when a carriage came up and she stopped a minute to see the people get out. The first was the lady who gave the breakfast, Lizzie had seen her

before, for she came sometimes—not every Sunday, but just sometimes—to see that the breakfast was all nice for her poor people. But this day, after she got out, she turned back to lift a little boy out of the carriage. And Lizzie had never seen this little boy before, because this was the first time he had ever come. His mother had brought him with her for a great treat. He was a very pretty little boy and his name was Arthur, and he was about six, I think it said in the story. The lady went into the room quick without noticing Lizzie, as she was in a hurry not to be late for the poor people, but Arthur stayed behind a minute and stared at Lizzie. She was so very cold, you know, she did look miserable, and then she had cried a little on the way, so her eyes were red.

"Arthur went close up to her, staring all the time. Lizzie didn't mind. She stared at him too. He was so pretty and he had such pretty clothes on. When he got close to her, he looked sharp up into her face and said—

"'What is you crying for?'

"Lizzie had forgotten she had been crying, so she said, 'I'm not crying. I'm only very cold.'

"'Poor little girl,' said Arthur, 'I'll ask Mamma to give you a penny.'

"He ran after his mother, who was wondering what he was staying for, and in a minute he came back again and put a little paper packet into Lizzie's hand.

"'That's all mother's got in her penny purse,' he said, and he ran off again before Lizzie had time to thank him.

"She was going to open the packet and see how much

there was, but just then one of the men who helped to put out the breakfast came past and told her not to loiter about. So she took up her basket and ran away, for people often spoke crossly to her, and she was easily frightened. All the way home she kept thinking about her pennies and what she would buy with them, but she didn't open the packet, because the way she had to go there were so many rude boys about that she was afraid they might snatch it from her. And when she got to the shop where she had to take the basket to, the baker sent her another message, so it wasn't till much later than usual that she got home. And all this time she had never opened the packet, at least it said so in the story, though I think *I* would have peeped at it before—wouldn't you, Cousin Magdalen?"

"I'm not sure," said Magdalen. "I think if one has something nice it is sometimes rather tempting to keep it for a while without looking it all over. It is something to look forward to."

"Yes," said Hoodie. "*I'd* have keepened it for alvays wrapped up, and then I could have alvays thought perhaps it was a fairy thing like."

"You silly girl," said Maudie, "you're always fancying about fairies."

"Maudie, *dear*" said Magdalen, "do try not to say things like that. You are telling the story so nicely and we're all so happy. Please don't spoil it by saying unkind little things."

"I didn't mean to be unkind," said Maudie penitently.

"P'ease do on with the story," said the little boys.

"Well, when at last she got home, she opened the

little packet," continued Maudie, "and what *do* you think she saw? Instead of two pennies and a halfpenny perhaps, or something like that, there were—let me see—yes, that was it—there were a gold pound, a half-a-crown, and a shilling. Just fancy! Lizzie was so surprised that she didn't know what she felt—she looked at them and looked at them, and turned them in her hand, and then all at once it came into her mind that of course the lady had given her them by mistake, and that she should take them back to her. And she jumped up very quick and said to her grandmother there was another message she had to go, and without thinking anything about whether the lady would still be there or not, off she ran back again to the place where the poor people had their breakfast. She ran as hard as she could, but of course when she got there it was too late—the breakfast was done long ago, and all the people away and the doors locked, and there was no one about at all to tell her where she could find the lady. And Lizzie was so unhappy that she sat down on a step and cried. You see it was such a disappointment, for she couldn't tell how much the lady *had* meant to give her, and so she didn't like to take any. Besides, she felt that it would be better to give the packet back just as it was, only she had so wanted the pennies, for she never had any. The baker's wife always paid her grandmother, not Lizzie herself, for Lizzie's going messages.

"And after she had cried a good while she got up and went home. But just as she got near the baker's shop she thought she might ask there if they knew the lady's name, so she went in to ask. There was no one in the shop but the young woman who helped—the others had gone to church."

"How was it the shop was open, then, as it was Sunday?" asked Magdalen.

"It wasn't open, only there was a sort of door in the shutters that Lizzie always went in and out by on Sunday mornings. I know that, because there was a picture of it—I remember now where I read the story—it was in a big picture magazine when I was quite a little girl," said Maudie. "And this young woman was tidying the shop a little, and just going to shut it altogether when Lizzie went in. She was a good-natured young woman and she looked in the money books for the lady's name, but it wasn't in—only the name of the man the room belonged to where the breakfast was—and then she asked Lizzie what she wanted to know for, and Lizzie told her. The young woman told her she was very silly to think of giving it back. She said to her that certainly the lady had *given* it her, it wasn't even as if she had found it. And Lizzie could not say that was not true, and she felt so puzzled at first that she didn't know what to say. The young woman offered to change it for her so that nobody could wonder how she had got a gold piece, but Lizzie said she would think about it first. And then she went home, and thought, and thought, till at last it came quite plain into her mind that though it was true that the lady had given it her, still it was *more* true that she hadn't meant to give it her. And then she didn't feel so unhappy."

Maudie stopped for a moment. It had turned out quite a long story, and she was a little tired.

"And what did she do then? Quick, Maudie," said Hoodie.

"What did her do? Kick, kick, Maudie," said the little boys.

"Hush, children, don't hurry Maudie so. Let her rest a minute," said Cousin Magdalen; "she must be a little tired with speaking so long."

"No, I'm not tired now," said Maudie, "only I want to remember to tell it quite right, and I couldn't quite remember what came next. Any way, she couldn't do anything more that day. But she wrapped up the money again quite safe, and put it in another paper, outside the one it had, and—oh, yes, that was it, she settled that she would wait till the next Sunday, and then stand at the door of the breakfast place to see the lady again. She didn't like telling any more people for fear they might take the money away from her, or something like that, and she couldn't think of anything better to do. Well, the next Sunday morning she took the bread as usual, and then she waited at the door for the lady to come, but she never came. Lizzie waited and waited, but she never came, and all the people had gone in and the breakfast was nearly done, but the lady never came. And at last she went and asked somebody if the lady wasn't coming —the woman who poured out the coffee, I think it was—and she told her no, the lady wasn't coming that day, and wouldn't come again for a great long while, because she was going away somewhere a good way off. Lizzie was so sorry, she began to cry, so the woman asked her what was the matter, and she told her, and the woman was so pleased with her for being so honest, that she gave her the lady's address and told her to go at once to the house, for perhaps she wouldn't have gone yet. But it was only another disappointment, for when poor Lizzie got there she found it was all shut up; they had gone away the day before."

"Poor Lizzie," said Magdalen, "what did she do then?"

"Poor Lizzie," said Hec and Duke, "and didn't she never get the real pennies?"

"It wasn't pennies she wanted so much," said Hoodie, "she wanted the lady to know how good she was."

"She wanted to *be* good, don't you think that would be a nicer way to say it, Hoodie?" said Cousin Magdalen. "You see, being so poor, it must sometimes have been very difficult for her not to use any of the money."

"Yes," said Maudie, "it said that in the story. Well, any way she *was* good. She sewed the money up in a little bag and put it in a safe place, and tried not to think about it. And all that winter she kept it and never touched it, though they were very poor that winter. It was so very cold, and poor people are always poorer in very cold winters, Martin says. Often they had no fire, and Lizzie's chilblains were dreadful, for her boots didn't keep out the rain and snow a bit, and often she was very hungry too, but still she never touched the money. And at last, after a very long time, the winter began to go away and the spring began to come, and the woman who poured out the coffee told Lizzie she had heard that the lady was coming home in the spring. So Lizzie began to wait a little every Sunday morning when she had given in the bread, to see if perhaps the lady would come. She waited like that for about six Sundays, I think, till at last one Sunday just as she was thinking it was no use waiting any more, the lady wouldn't be coming, a carriage drove up to the door, the very same carriage that Lizzie had seen come there before, and—and—the lady—the real same lady, and the real same little boy, got out! And Lizzie was so pleased she didn't know what to do, for though she

had only seen them once before, she had watched for them so long that they seemed like great friends to her. But though she was so pleased, she began all to tremble and at first she couldn't speak, her voice went all away. She just pulled the lady's dress and looked up in her face but she couldn't speak. At first the lady didn't understand, though she was a kind lady she didn't like a dirty-looking little girl pulling her dress, and she looked at her a little sharply. But the little boy understood, and he called out—

"'Oh, mamma, mamma, it's the same little girl. Don't you remember? I wonder if she's been waiting here ever since.'

"*That* was rather silly of him; of course she couldn't have been there ever since, but he was quite a little boy. And then the lady looked kindly at Lizzie and Lizzie's voice came back, and she said—

"'Oh, ma'am, this is the money you gave me by mistake. I've kept it all this time,' and she put the little packet into the lady's hand. And then something came over her; the feeling of having waited so long, I suppose, and she burst into tears. And what *do* you think the lady did? She was so sorry for poor Lizzie, and so pleased with her, that she actually kissed her!"

"Aczhally *kissed* her," repeated Hoodie, Hec, and Duke. "That dirty girl!"

"No," said Maudie, "she wasn't dirty. She was poor, but she wasn't dirty."

"You said she was once," said Hoodie.

"Well, I didn't mean dirty, really. I meant she looked so, because her clothes were so old. And any way the

lady did kiss her, and then she was so kind. She had never thought of having given Lizzie the money. It was some she had put up to pay a bill with, and she had meant to put it in her other purse, and when she couldn't find it, she thought she had lost it somehow. And though she was sorry, of course it didn't matter so very much. And she said if she had known she would have written a letter to the coffee woman to tell her to spend it for warm clothes for poor Lizzie. But after all, it all turned out nice. The lady was very kind to Lizzie after that, and paid for her going to school and being taught all nice things, so that when she got a little bigger she was a very nice servant. I think it said in the story that she learnt to be a nurse, and she was a very kind nurse always."

"Like Martin?" said Duke.

"Yes," said Maudie.

"Perhaps she was even kinder than Martin," suggested Hec. "Perhaps she was *awful* kind."

"Nobody could be kinder than Martin, except when we're naughty," said Duke, reproachfully.

"Don't you think we should all thank Maudie for telling us such a nice story?" said Magdalen. "*I* thank her very much."

"So do I," said Duke.

"And me," said Hec.

"And me," said Hoodie, "only I want to tell a story too."

"We're all ready to listen," said Miss King. "But it mustn't be *very* long. I've to go out with your mother this afternoon, so I must write some letters before

luncheon. And Hec and Duke have stories to tell, too, haven't they? So fire away, Hoodie."

CHAPTER VIII.

HOODIE'S FOUNDLING.

"I almost think a robin
To a fairy I prefer."

Hoodie gazed round her condescendingly.

"I've such lots of stories in my head," she said. "They knock against each other. Well—I think I'll tell you a story of two little goblins. They lived in a star, and they were just e'zackly like each other. As like as two pins, or as like as a pin is to itself if you look at it in the looking-glass. They lived all alone in the star, and all day they stayed asleep like we do all night, but all night they were awake like we are all day, 'cos you see all day the star was shut up—like a shop, you know, only with curtains all round—all the stars are shut up like that all day, you know, and at night the moon wakes up and sends round to draw the curtains, and all the stars come out, rubbing their eyes."

"They hasn't any hands—how can they rub their eyes?" objected Duke.

"You silly boy," said Hoodie, very sharply. "How do

you know? You've never been in the stars."

"But you hasn't neither," he persisted.

"Never mind. I know, and if I didn't I couldn't tell you. That's how people can tell stories. Well, the stars come out, lots and lots of them, and go running about all night, and then in the morning the moon sends round to draw all the curtains again and they're all to go to sleep."

"But some nights the moon isn't there and the stars are there without her. How is that, Hoodie?" said Cousin Magdalen, rather mischievously.

"You think so 'cos you don't know; but I do," said Hoodie, nodding her head sagaciously. "The moon's *alvays* there, only sometimes she has a cold, and then she wraps up her white face in a shawl and you can't see her."

There was a twinkle of fun in Hoodie's green eyes as she said this that showed her cousin that her little teasing was understood.

"Oh, indeed," she said, gravely, "I did *not* know. Thank you, Hoodie, for explaining to me."

"And so," continued Hoodie, "the goblins never saw anything of day things, but they saw very funny things at night when they went sailing about on the star."

"Stars don't go sailing about," objected Maudie. "They're always quite still."

"They're *not* then," said Hoodie: "that shows you don't listen, Maudie. I heard Papa say one day that the stars are going as fast as fast, only they go *so* fast that we can't see them."

"What nonsense! Isn't it nonsense, Cousin Magdalen?" pleaded Maudie.

"No," said Miss King. "It is true they are moving faster than we can even fancy, but the reason we can't see them moving isn't *exactly* what Hoodie says."

"What is it then?"

"I can't explain it to you just now—it would not be very easy for you to understand, and if I explained it, it would take too much time and we shouldn't hear the rest of Hoodie's story. I think we should let poor Hoodie go on with her story now without interrupting her any more."

Hoodie required no further bidding.

"Well," she said, "all night long the goblins went sailing about in the star, and sometimes they saw very funny things. They were up so high that they could look down and see everything, you know. They could see the big ponds up in the sky where the rain is made, and the *awful* big windmills up there where the wind blows from, and the cannons that bum the thunder down."

"Could they——?" began Duke, timidly, and then he stopped.

"Could they what?" said Hoodie, rather snappishly. "If peoples interrumpt, I wish they'd finish their interrumpting, and not stop in the middle."



"If peoples interrumpt, I wish they'd finish their interrumpting, and not stop in the middle."

"I didn't like to say it," said Duke. "I only wanted to know if they could see right into the middle of the sky where the angels are."

"No," said Hoodie, decidedly, "they couldn't. They was goblins; they wasn't angels at all, so they didn't want to see angels. It isn't that kind of story, Duke—I'll tell you one like that another day—Sunday perhaps. Now I want to go on about the goblins. What they liked best was to peep into the windows and look at people, and play them tricks sometimes. They was awful fond of playing tricks; goblins always is. But sometimes they gets tricks played them, and that's what my story's about. There was a window up in a house that they wanted to look in at, but they couldn't ever get quite high enough up, 'cos the window was at the top of the house, you see. It was the window of a witch, but the goblins didn't know that. She was a witch that lived all alone, and there wasn't anything she cared for except playing tricks, she was always playing tricks. She knowed the goblins wanted to peep in at her window, she knowed everything, 'cos that's what it means to be a witch, that and playing tricks. And she set herself to play a trick on the goblins—a reg'lar good trick, 'cos she didn't see what they was always wanting to peep in at her window for."

Hoodie paused for a moment to take breath.

"I *wonder* what the trick was," whispered Duke and Hec under their breath, evidently very much impressed.

"Yes, you may wonder," said Hoodie, majestically. "You'd never guess. Not in a milliond guesses. Well then, one night when the goblins was twisting and turning theirselves about on the very edge of the star, trying to peep in at the window, all of a suddent the witch's house turned right round, so that the window came to the side instead of up at the top,

and one of the goblins gave a great jump and screamed out to the other—

"'I say, brother, we can see into the witch's house now.'"

"But you said the goblins didn't know it was a witch that lived there," said Maudie.

"Well, they didn't know *at first*, but when they saw the house turned round, of course they knowed it must be a witch that lived there. Nobody else could turn their house round," said Hoodie, composedly. "And so they both *screamed*, they were so pleased, and all the time the witch was settling about the trick she'd play them. Now I must tell you what the trick was. The witch wasn't all a bad witch—she was a little good too, and there was a little girl lived in the room next to her that liked her very much, 'cos the witch was very good to her and used to tell her funny stories. And that was why the witch didn't want the goblins to peep into her room, 'cos she thought perhaps they'd steal away the little girl for a trick, for she was very often in the witch's room, and goblins is *awful* fond of stealing children and taking them up into the stars to live with them, so she—the witch, I mean—was sure that they'd try to steal her little girl once they saw her. So when the little girl came to see her that night, she made her go to bed in a nice little bed she'd made for her, and told her she was to be quite still, for perhaps a' ogre was coming to see her. The little girl was a little frightened but not very, for she knowed the witch would take care of her even though she knowed the witch had got very funny friends, ogres you know, and black cats that was really fairies, and all creatures like that—it's rather a dedful story, isn't it?—but you needn't be

frightened, Duke and Hec, it'll come unfrightening soon. And so the little girl got into the little bed and cuddled herself up just like the witch had told her. And the goblins came sailing and sailing up on the star; they was working it like, to make it go quick you know, like a boat with men oaring it you know, and they was oaring and oaring so hard, they was as hot as hot. And at last they got the star right up to the edge of the window, but they made a little noise and the little girl was startled and jumped up in bed, just what the witch had not wanted her to do, and the goblins when they saw her forgot all about the witch and called out, 'Oh what a nice little girl to steal,' and they were *just* going to jump in and catch her up and steal her, when—what *do* you think?—the witch jumped out of the corner where she had been watching them and caught hold of them fast, one in each hand, and put them—where *do* you think?—one into each of the little girl's eyes! And they couldn't ever get out again, for there's a fine little glass lid in people's eyes that nobody could open but a witch, and she shut it down on them tight, and there they were; they couldn't do anything but peep out, and there they were for always, peeping out."

"But didn't it hurt the little girl?" asked Maudie. "It would hurt dreadfully to have the least thing put in your eye."

"Oh no," said Hoodie, "it didn't hurt her—not a bit—she just thought a fly had tickled her eyes, and she winkled them, and the witch said to her, 'You may come out of bed now, my dear. The ogre won't be coming to-night.' And so the little girl got out of bed, and when she came up to the witch, the witch looked at her and laughed, and the little girl couldn't think

what she was laughing at, and she never knowed about the goblins being in her eyes till one day when her little brother was playing with her, he peeped in her face and said, 'I see two goblins in your eyes.'"

"That was me," exclaimed Duke. "It was one day I looked in Hoodie's eyes and I saw two goblings in 'zem, I did. Hoodie's made the story about me."

"I hasn't," said Hoodie, indignantly. "I've got stories enough without making them about silly little boys like you. Of course you saw the goblins in mine eyes —there's goblins in every little girl's eyes ever since the witch put them into her little girl's. It's comed to be the fashion, and now you know how it was, and that's the end of the story."

"Thank you for telling it, Hoodie," said Magdalen. "We're all very much obliged to you, and another day I hope you'll tell us some more. Now Duke and Hec, are your stories ready?"

Hec looked exceedingly solemn.

"I only know one," he said; "Duke knows lots."

"Well, which of you is going to begin?"

"Hec," said Duke.

"Duke," said Hec.

"Mine isn't ready," said Duke. "Hec, you begin. If you only know one it must be always ready."

"Mine's only about a little dog," began Hec, modestly. "It was a little dog that had only three legs."

"Only three legs!" exclaimed Magdalen. "My dear Hec, are you sure you haven't made a mistake?"

"Sure," said Hec, "the housemaid had broke its leg off a long time ago, when she was dusting the mantelpiece, so the Mamma gave it to the little boy because it was spoilt for the drawing-room. And the little boy was very fond of it—it was made of hard stuff, you know, all white and shiny, and it had blue eyes. It was *very* pretty. Martin told me the story. She knowed the little boy. And one day the little boy lostened the little dog. He always had it on the nursery table at breakfast and dinner and tea; and he used to 'atend to feed it. Sometimes he put it on the edge of his plate, and sometimes if he 'atended it was 'firsty he put it on the edge of the milk-jug. And one day he lostened it. It was there at the beginning of tea he was sure, but at the end it wasn't there. And he looked and looked and looked but he couldn't find it; and the nurse looked and looked, but she couldn't find it. So the little boy cried. He cried dedfully, but he couldn't find it. And the nurse was vexed 'cos he wouldn't stop crying. She wasn't as kind as Martin. So he had to go to bed crying, and the next morning when he got up he cried again for his little doggie. And his Mamma said she would buy him another, but he didn't care for that. He said he wouldn't like any but his own dear doggie with only three legs. Well, that day they had rice-pudding for dinner. The little boy kept crying even when he was eating his dinner, and they zeally didn't know what to do with him. But what do you think came? He put some pudding in his mouf, and there was some'sing hard. He thought it was a stone, and he feeled to see what it was, and it was his little dog that had been cooked in the pudding—aczhally cooked in the pudding."

"Like Tom Thumb," said Magdalen. "Yes, it was very funny. But it must have been a very little dog, Hec, to go in the little boy's mouth?"

"Oh yes, littler than Martin's fimble. She showed me," said Hec. "It was quite a little wee doggie. And Martin said it had got into the pudding, 'cos it had been on the edge of the milk-jug and had felled in, and so it went down to the kitchen in the milk-jug, and the cook had put the milk that was over, to make a pudding. The little boy was so dedfully glad, you can't fancy. He never lostened the little dog again, Martin said, and he said he would keep it till he was a big man. That's all my story."

"Thank you, dear. You've told it very nicely. Hasn't he?" said Miss King.

"*Very* nicely," said Maudie.

But Hoodie tossed her head rather contemptuously.

"*I* like stories that peoples make out of their own heads," she said.

"So do I," said Duke. "I've been making mine while Hec was telling his; I didn't need to listen, for I've heard the story of the little dog before. Now, I'll tell you mine. Onst there was a ogre that lived in a castle, and the castle was on the top of a big, big hill —such a awfully big hill that nobody could ever get up it—not the biggest person that ever was made couldn't get up it."

"How did the ogre get up it then?" said Hoodie.

"He didn't. He'd always been there and he had a' ogre's wife to cook his dinner, and he had a—a—oh yes, I know, he had a awful big billiard-table, and he used to use little boys' heads for the balls," continued Duke, his eyes wandering round the room for inspiration as he proceeded. "And," he went on, as he caught sight of a large mirror at the end of the room,

"he was so big he couldn't get any plates big enough for him to eat off, so he used to have big looking-glasses for plates, and—and—he had a coal-box for a salt-cellar, and when he had a' egg for breakfast he had the shovel for a' egg spoon, and—and—the white muslin curtains was his pocket-hankerwitches, and ——" here Duke came to a dead stop, but another gaze round the room provided fresh material, "and," he proceeded energetically, "the Venetian blind sticks was his matches, and his ogre's wife used to wash his hankerwitches in a lake, and that was his basin; and for soup she used a—oh I don't know what she had for soup—never mind that. But she had beautiful big earrings," his eyes at this moment happening to catch sight of Magdalen's side-face, "beautiful big earrings made of two shiny glass and goldy things for candles, like that one hanging up there, and——"

"You're just making a rubbish story, Duke," said Maudie. "You just put in whatever you see. I don't call that a proper story at all. Is it, Cousin Magdalen?"

"You're very unkind, Maudie," said Duke, dolefully, before Magdalen had time to reply. "It isn't a rubbish story. I was just going to tell you about one day when the ogre was very hungry——"

"Well, what did he do?"

"Well," repeated Duke, somewhat mollified, "one day when the ogre was very hungry, he couldn't find nothing to eat, and he said to his wife, 'Ogre's wife, I'll eat *you*, if you don't get me somefin to eat too-dreckly.' And his ogre's wife cried, and she said she'd go to the green-baker's and see if she couldn't get somefin for he to eat."

"Go to the *where*, Duke?" said Magdalen, looking up from her work.

"To the green-baker's, that's where they sell apples and pears and p'ums," said Duke.

Maudie burst out laughing.

"He means the green-*grocer's*," she said. "Oh, Duke, how funny you are!"

"And how could the ogre's wife go and buy him things at shops if they were up on the top of a hill so big that nobody could get down?"

"Oh," replied Duke, "'cos there was andnother hill just a very little way off that they could get on quite easily, like steps, and there was lots of shops on the nother hill—all kinds."

"All shops for ogreses?" inquired Hec timidly.

"No, in course not. Shops for proper people. But when the ogre's wife went to buy somefin for him to eat she had to buy a whole shop-ful—lots and lots—but I zink I've toldened you enough for to-day. I must make some more up first."

"Very well, dear, perhaps it will be better, and thank you for what you've told us to-day," said Cousin Magdalen, beginning to fold up her work. "I must try now to get my letter written before luncheon. I hope it's not going to rain all the afternoon."

One or two of the children ran to the window, as she spoke, to examine the state of the clouds. Suddenly, as they stood there, something, a small dark thing, was seen to fall or flutter to the ground, a short way off.

"What was that?" said Hoodie, whose quick eyes always saw things before any one else.

"What?" said Duke deliberately.

"Didn't you see something fall, stupid boy?" said Hoodie politely.

"Yes, I saw somefin, but perhaps it was only a leaf."

"But perhaps it wasn't only a leaf," said Hoodie impatiently. "There now, look there, don't you see it's moving? Over there by the little fat tree with the spiky leaves—oh, oh, oh! It's a bird—a poor little innicent bird—that's felled out of a netst," screamed Hoodie, in tremendous excitement, which always upset her English. "Oh, Cousin Magdalen, quick, quick! open the door, do, do, and let Hoodie go and fetcht the poor little bird."

She danced about with impatience, her eyes streaming—for in curious contrast with Hoodie's scant affection for her fellow human beings was her immense tenderness and devotion towards dumb animals of every kind. She "would not hurt a fly" would have very poorly described her feelings. She had been known to nurse a maimed bluebottle for a week, getting up in the night to give it fresh crumbs of sugar—she had cried for two days and a half after accidentally seeing the last struggles of a chicken which the cook had killed for dinner, and had she clearly understood that the mutton-chops she was so fond of were really the ribs of "a poor sweet little sheep," I am quite sure mutton-chops would in future have been cooked in vain for Hoodie.

Cousin Magdalen had not hitherto seen much of this side of the little girl's character, and she looked at

her with some surprise, not sure if there was a mixture of temper in all these dancings-about and callings-out. But she came quickly across the room all the same, to the window, or glass door rather, where all the children were now assembled—

"What is it?" she said. "Hoodie, dear, why do you get into such a fuss?"

"'Cos I want to go out and pick up the little bird, poor little innicent thing, that's felled out of the tree. Oh, Maudie's godmother, do open the door—quick, quick, and let me out," said Hoodie, still dancing about. "The bird will be lying there thinking that nobody cares."

Magdalen quietly unfastened the door, which was bolted high up, out of the children's reach, and led the way out into the shrubbery. The rain had left off, but it had warmed rather than chilled the spring morning air, and a delicious scent of freshened earth met the little party as they came out of the billiard-room. Magdalen would have liked to stand still for a moment and look about her, and enjoy the sweet air, and listen to the pretty soft garden sounds—the crisp crunch of the heavy roller which the men were drawing over the damp gravel of the drive, the voices, further off, of the school children running home, for it was twelve o'clock,—prettier still, the faint cackles from the poultry-yard, and the twitterings, gradually waking up, of the birds, whose spirits had been depressed by the heavy rain—but where *Hoodie* was, such lingerings by the way must never be thought of! The child darted out the moment the door was opened, and rushed across the grass-plot just in front—heedless of the soaking to which this exposed her feet and legs up to her knees,

for the grass hereabouts was allowed to grow wild, and in the corners near the wall was mixed with coarse ferns and bracken, through all of which Hoodie determinedly ploughed her way.

"Oh dear," exclaimed poor Magdalen, "how *silly* I was to open the door! Just look at Hoodie, Maudie. She will be perfectly drenched. Martin really will have reason to think I am not fit to take care of you."

"And she has her *best* house shoes on," said Maudie, lugubriously. "Martin put them on when she made us neat to come down to you, Cousin Magdalen, because one of her common ones wanted stitching up at the side, and Martin always says mirocco shoes never *are* the same again after they get soaked."

"I must go after her, at all costs," said Magdalen, lifting up her long skirts as well as she could to prevent their getting any *more* than their share of drenching. "Now, Duke and Hec, stay where you are, whatever you do, or better still, go back into the billiard-room. I trust you, Maudie, to take care of them. I am afraid their feet are wet already."

"Yes, and Hec gets croup when his feet are wet," replied Maudie, consolingly. "Never mind though, Cousin Magdalen. I'll take him in, and take off his shoes and stockings by the fire and dry them."

"Thank you, dear," said Magdalen, at the bottom of her heart, though she would not have said so to the children, considerably relieved that Martin need not be summoned to the rescue. "She would really feel that I could not be trusted with them, and it would be such a pity, just when I wanted so much to be of use and to help Beatrice." (Beatrice was the name of the children's mother.)

It was no very pleasant business following Hoodie across the long, soppy grass; even if one were quite careless of the effect on one's clothes, the soaking of one's feet and ankles was disagreeable, to say the least. But Magdalen faced it bravely, and found herself at last beside her troublesome charge. Hoodie, not content with having thoroughly drenched her fat little legs and feet in their pretty clothing of open-work socks and "mirocco" slippers, was actually down on her knees in the wet grass, tenderly stroking the ruffled feathers of the little bird whose misfortunes had aroused her sympathy, while tears poured down her face, and her voice was broken with sobs as, looking up, she saw her cousin, and cried out—

"Oh, Maudie's godmother, him's dead. The innicent little sweet. I do believe him's dead, or just going to deaden. I daren't lift him up. Oh dear, oh dear!"

It was impossible to scold her—her grief was so real; so with one rueful glance at the destruction already wrought on the nice blue merino frock and frilled muslin pinafore, Magdalen set to work to soothe and comfort the excited little girl.

"Hush, Hoodie dear," she said. "You really mustn't cry so, even if the poor little bird is dead."

"But Hoodie can't help it, for you know, Maudie's godmother, little birds doesn't go to heaven when they's dead—not like good people, you know, so I can't help crying."

To this reason for Hoodie's tears Magdalen thought it best to make no reply, but she stooped down and carefully lifted up the little bird. It was a pretty little creature—its wings and breast marked with

delicately shaded colour, though just now the feathers were ruffled and disordered—a very young bird; and Magdalen's country-bred eyes recognized it at once as a greenfinch.

"Poor little birdie," she said gently, as she held it up to examine it more closely. "I wonder if its troubles are really over," she added to herself softly, not wishing to rouse Hoodie's hopes before she was sure of grounds for them. "No—it is not dead. It certainly is not—only stunned and terrified. Hoodie, the little bird is not dead. Leave off crying dear, and look at it. See, its little heart is beating quite plainly—there now, it is moving its wings. I don't think it is even much, or at all hurt."

Hoodie drew near, her tear-stained cheeks all glowing with eagerness, holding her breath just as she did when her father for a great treat let her peep into the works of his watch.

"Him's not dead," she exclaimed. "*Oh*, Cousin Magdalen, are you *sure* him's not dead? Oh, what *can* we do to make him quite well again?"

She clasped her hands together with intense eagerness, and looked up in Magdalen's face as if her very life hung upon her words.

"It must have fallen out of the nest," said Magdalen, looking up as she spoke at some of the trees near where they stood. "Still it seemed fully fledged, and it should be quite able to fly—most likely its parents suppose it is out in the world on its own account by now, and even if we could find the nest, it is pretty sure to be deserted."

"You won't put it back in the netst, Cousin Magdalen

—you don't mean that? It wouldn't have nothing to eat, and it would die," said Hoodie, the tears welling up again, for she hardly understood what her cousin was saying.

"No, dear. I don't think it would be any good putting it back in the nest, and it would be very difficult to know which was its nest, there must be so many up in those trees," said Magdalen. "Besides, as you say, it wouldn't get anything to eat, for if all its brothers and sisters have flown away, the parent birds will not return to the nest. No, I think we had better take it into the house and take care of it till it gets quite strong. See, Hoodie, it is beginning to get out of its fright and to look about it."

"The darling," said Hoodie, ecstatically. "It's cocking up its *sweet* little head as if it wanted me to kiss it. Oh, *dear* Cousin Magdalen, isn't it sweet? Do let me carry it into the house."



"The darling," said Hoodie ecstatically

But Magdalen told her it was better to leave the bird for the present in her handkerchief, which she had made into a comfortable little nest for it, "till we can

find a cage for it; there is sure to be an empty cage of some kind about the house. And then we must see if your mother will give you leave to keep it for a while."

"For alvays!" said Hoodie. "I must keep it for alvays, Maudie's godmother. Maudie has two calanies in a cage, so I might have one bird—mightn't I, Cousin Magdalen?"

"We'll ask your mother," repeated Magdalen, afraid of committing herself to a child like Hoodie, who never, under any circumstances, forgot anything in the shape of a promise that was made to her, or had the least mercy on any unfortunate "big person" that showed any signs of "crying off" from such.

CHAPTER IX.

THE GOLDEN CAGE.

"Here secure from every danger,
Hop about, and chirp, and eat."

"Yes," repeated Hoodie to herself, as she followed her cousin into the house, "I'll keep the little bird *alvays*, and I'll teach it to love me; I'll be so *vezzy* kind to it."

And as they entered the billiard-room where, true to her charge, faithful little Maudie was drying and warming the twins' feet by the fire, Hoodie

exclaimed with great triumph—

"It's a bird, Maudie, a most bootiful bird, and I'm going to have it all for my vezzy own and keep it in a cage alvays. Cousin Magdalen is going to ask Mamma. May I go and tell her to come now quick, Cousin Magdalen?"

"No, my dear, certainly not. Your mother's busy and must not be interrupted. You may go and ask for a little milk and a bit of bread, and I'll try if I can make the little bird eat something. It's opening its mouth as if it was hungry. But no—stop, Hoodie. I was forgetting what a state you are in. Maudie, take off her shoes and stockings too—that's a kind little girl. I'll help you in a minute when I've found a safe place for the little bird. There now—that'll do beautifully," as she spoke taking the skeins of wool out of her little work-basket and putting the bird in instead and carefully closing the lid. The children looked on with great interest.

"Is him always to live in zere, Cousin Magdalen?" inquired Hec.

Magdalen was by this time employed in examining into the state of Hoodie's garments. It was rather deplorable!

"It's no good, Maudie," she exclaimed at last. "She must be thoroughly undressed, for she's damp all over. I *must* take her up to Martin—oh, dear, what a pity! Just when we had had such a nice morning."

"But it was a vezzy good thing I saw the little bird felling down, wasn't it?" said Hoodie complacently, as she trotted off with her cousin's hand. "And Martin won't 'cold *me*, 'cos it was your fault for letting me go

out in the wet; wasn't it, Cousin Magdalen?" she added with great satisfaction.

Magdalen, to tell the truth, found it rather difficult to keep her temper with Hoodie just then.

"*Hoodie*," she said sharply. "It is not right to speak like that. You *know* you ran away out before I could stop you."

"But if you hadn't opened the door, I couldn't have goned," was Hoodie's calm reply, with mischievous triumph in her bright eyes.

Martin received the misfortune very philosophically —perhaps she was not sorry, at the bottom of her heart, that some one else should have some experience of the trials she had with Hoodie.

"Not that she means always to be naughty, of course, Miss," she explained to Magdalen. "But she's that heedless and tiresome—oh dear! Though one could manage that if it wasn't for her queer temper—*queer* indeed! queer's no word for it."

"Martin, Martin," came in Hoodie's shrill voice from the inner room, where she was sitting, minus the greater part of her attire, while Martin "aired" the clean clothes, unexpectedly required, at the nursery fire. "Martin, you must go down to the kitchen *at oncest*, and get some bread and milk for my bird. I'm going to keep it *alvays*, Martin, and you mustn't let Duke and Hec touch it never."

"Well, well, Missie, we'll see," said Martin; "you must get your Mamma's leave first, you know."

"By the bye, I'd better go and speak to her about it," said Magdalen. "Shall I tell the other children to

come up-stairs, Martin? And my poor letter," she said, smiling rather dolefully, as she went out of the nursery, "I'll never get it written before luncheon, for I must superintend the feeding of the bird, otherwise the children will certainly kill it with kindness."

Magdalen had a good deal of experience in rearing little birds and little lambs, and all such small unfortunates. She had always lived in the country, and having neither brothers nor sisters her tender heart had given its affections to the dumb creatures about her. It was fortunate for the foundling bird that it fell into her hands, as had it been left to Hoodie's affectionate cares its history would certainly have been quickly told. She was very indignant with Magdalen for the very tiny portions of bread and milk, which was all she would allow it to have, and asked her indignantly if she meant to "'tarve" the poor little pet.

"Hush, Hoodie," said her mother, who had come to see the little bird. "If you speak so to Cousin Magdalen I certainly will not let you keep the bird. You should thank her *very* much for being so kind to you and giving up all her morning to you."

Hoodie did not condescend to take any notice of her mother's reproof.

"Hoodie," said Mrs. Caryll, "do you not hear what I say?"

No reply.

"*Hoodie*," more sternly.

Hoodie looked up at last.

"Mamma dear," she said sweetly, "may I keep the

little bird for my vezzy own? Cousin Magdalen said she would ask you if I might."

Her mother looked puzzled.

"If you are good perhaps I will let you keep it," she replied.

Hoodie looked up sharply.

"Did Cousin Magdalen ask you to let me keep it, Mamma?" she inquired.

"Yes," said her mother.

Hoodie turned to Magdalen.

"Thank you, Maudie's godmother," she said condescendingly. "I thought perhaps you had forgottened."

"And you wouldn't thank me till you were sure—was that it—eh, Hoodie?" said Magdalen.

One of her funny twinkles came into Hoodie's green eyes.

"I like peoples what doesn't forget," she remarked, with a toss of her shaggy head.

Magdalen turned away to hide her amusement, but Hoodie's mother whispered rather dolefully, "Magdalen, was there *ever* such a child?"

And Hoodie heard the words, and her little face grew hard and sullen.

"I'm always naughty," she said to herself. "Naughty when I tell true, and naughty when I don't tell true. Nobody loves me, but I'll teach my bird to love me."

"What is to be done about a cage for this little creature?" said Magdalen, looking up from her occupation of feeding the greenfinch with quillfuls of bread and milk. "Isn't there an old one anywhere about, that would do?"

"I'm afraid not," said Hoodie's mother. "What can we do?"

"Leave it in the basket for the present," said Magdalen. "And—if Hoodie is *very* good, perhaps ——"

"Perhaps what?" said Hoodie, very eagerly.

"Perhaps some kind fairy will fly down with a cage for the poor little bird," said Magdalen, mysteriously.

Again Hoodie's eyes twinkled with fun.

"*I* know who the kind fairy will be," she said, skipping about in delight. Then suddenly she flung herself upon her cousin and hugged her valorously.

"I do love *you*, Cousin Magdalen," she whispered. "I do. I *do*. And I'd love Mamma too," she added—her mother having left the room—"if she wouldn't *alvays* say I'm naughty."

"But Hoodie, my dear little girl, do you really think you are always good?" said Magdalen.

"In course not," said Hoodie, "but I'm not *alvays* naughty neither."

Just then the luncheon-bell rang, and the interesting discussion, greatly, it is to be feared, to Hoodie's satisfaction, could not be continued.

"You're going to be very good to-day, any way, aren't

you, Hoodie?" whispered Magdalen, as they went into the dining-room, where the children dined at the big people's luncheon.

"P'raps," replied Hoodie.

"Because you know the kind fairy can't give you the cage if you're not," said Magdalen, smiling.

"I forgot about that," observed Hoodie, coolly.

And her behaviour during the meal left nothing to be desired. But to do her justice, her naughtiness did not as a rule show itself in such circumstances, and according to Martin this was the "provokingest" part of it. "That a little lady who could be so pretty behaved if she chose should stamp and scream and rage like a little wild bear"—though where Martin had seen these wonderful performances of little wild bears, I am sorry to say I cannot tell you—*was* aggravating, there is no doubt. And as Magdalen watched Hoodie through luncheon, and saw her pretty way of handling her knife and fork, and noticed how she never asked for anything but waited till it was offered her, never forgot her "if you please's" and "thank you's," and was always perfectly content with whatever was given her, she repeated to herself in other words Martin's often expressed opinion.

"What a nice child she might be! What a nice child she *is*, when she likes! Oh, Hoodie, what a pity it is that you ever let the little black dog climb on to your shoulders or the little cross imps get into your heart!"

Just at that moment Hoodie caught her eye. She drew herself straight up on her chair with a little air of inviting approval.

"Am I not *vezzy* good?" Magdalen could almost fancy she heard her saying, and in spite of herself, she could not help smiling back at the funny little girl.

Luncheon over, the children were dismissed for their walk, for the rain was now quite over and the afternoon promised to be fine and sunny. As they were leaving the room Hoodie threw her arms round Magdalen's neck and drew her head down that she might whisper into her ear.

"Will the fairy come, does you think?" she asked.

"I hope so," said Magdalen, in the same tone; "but, Hoodie, you must promise me one thing. You must not touch the little bird while I am away. I have put it on my table in the basket and it will be quite safe there. You may go in to look at it with Maudie, but you must not touch it."

"Won't it be hungry?" inquired Hoodie.

"Oh no, I'll give it a little more before I go out, and then it will be all right till I come in. You promise, Hoodie?"

Hoodie nodded her head.

"P'omise," she repeated.

Magdalen looked after her anxiously.

"Poor little Hoodie," she said to herself, as she watched the neat little figure tripping out of the room. Just then the children's mother came over to her.

"Magdalen, my dear child," she said, "you must not worry yourself about these children. You have been looking quite careworn all the morning, and I can't

have it."

"But I wanted to help you with them, so that you might have a little rest and get quite strong again, dear Beatrice," said Magdalen. "You have never been really well since your illness last winter, and Mamma and I thought I should be able to help you—and—and—" the tears came into Cousin Magdalen's pretty eyes.

"Well, dear, and who could have done more to help me than you, since you have been here? I shall miss you terribly when you go, especially about Hoodie," and in spite of her wish to cheer Magdalen, Hoodie's mother gave a little sigh.

"It was about Hoodie I was thinking," said Magdalen. "I was so anxious to do her good."

"And don't you think you have?"

Magdalen hesitated.

"I don't know. Sometimes I think I have made an impression on her, and then it seems all to have gone off again. She is such a queer mixture—in some ways so old for her age, and in some ways such a baby."

"Yes," said Mrs. Caryll. "It is so very difficult to know how to treat her. But she is very fond of you, Magdalen, and I am so glad to see it. We really used to think it wasn't in her to be fond of any one."

"But I am sure it is in her," said Magdalen, "only—I hardly can say what I mean—if she could be made to believe that other people love *her*, that she could be of use to others—I think that would take away the sort of defiance and hardness one sees in her sometimes. It is so unlike a child. She is always

imagining people don't care for her, and then she takes actual pleasure in being as naughty as she can be."

"Yes," said Hoodie's mother; "there really are days when she goes out of her way to be naughty, one might say,—when it is enough for Martin to tell her to do or not to do *anything*, for her to wish to do or not to do the opposite. Still she *has* been better lately, Magdalen, and it is all thanks to you."

"Poor little Hoodie!" said her cousin, "I wonder why it should be so very difficult for her to be good. But we must get ready now, must we not, Beatrice? And *whatever* I do I must not forget the cage, or any good I can ever hope to do Hoodie will be at an end!"

"But she is only to have it if she really has been good?" said Mrs. Caryll, who was sometimes afraid that Magdalen was rather inclined to spoil Hoodie.

"Only if she has been good, you may be sure," said Magdalen. "And there is one thing about Hoodie—she does keep a promise."

"You think she is honest and truthful?" said Mrs. Caryll.

"By nature I am sure she is. But her brain is so full of fancies that she hardly understands herself, that I can quite see how sometimes it must seem as if she were not straightforward. Not that the fancies would do her any harm if they were all happy and pretty ones—but I do wish she could get rid of the idea that no one cares for her. It is *that* that sours her and spoils her, poor little girl."

Hoodie's mother looked affectionately at Magdalen.

"Where have you learnt to be so wise about children, Magda?" she said. "You seem to understand them as if you had lived among them all your life."

"It is only because I love them so much," said Magdalen, simply. "And often somehow——" she hesitated.

"Often what?" said her cousin, smiling.

"I was going to say—but I stopped because I thought perhaps you would not like it as we were talking of your children who have everything to make them happy—" said Magdalen. "I was going to say that sometimes, often, I am so very, very sorry for children. Even their naughtinesses and sillinesses make me sorry for them. They are so strange to it all—and it is so difficult to learn wisdom."

Hoodie's mother smiled again.

"You are such a venerable owl yourself, you funny child," she said. "However, I do understand you, and I agree with you. I do feel very sorry for poor Hoodie sometimes, even though she really goes out of her way to make herself unhappy. But what *is* one to do?"

"Yes, that is the puzzle," said Magdalen. "In the first place any way, I am going to buy her a cage for her bird—it will be good for her to take regular care of the bird. I am so glad you said she might keep it."

"I only hope we shall be able to rear it," said Mrs. Caryll. "Hoodie would indeed think all the powers were against her if it died. That is the worst of pets."

"I think this bird will get on, if it is taken care of and not over-fed," said Magdalen. "It is a greenfinch, you

know, and greenfinches take kindly to domestic life. Besides, it is not so very young a bird, and it looks quite bright and happy now that it has got over its fright," and so saying she followed Hoodie's mother out of the room to prepare for their drive.

It was nearly five o'clock in the afternoon when they returned. Cousin Magdalen ran joyously up-stairs to the nursery carrying a very funnily-shaped parcel in her hand. The children were all at tea. She heard their voices and the clatter and tinkle that always accompanies a nursery meal as she came along the passage, and she opened the door so softly that for a moment or two she stood watching the little party before any of them noticed her.

How nice and pretty and happy they looked! Martin, a perfect picture of a kind, tidy nurse, sat pouring out the tea, looking for once quite easy-minded and at rest; Maudie, a little model of neatness as usual, her small sweet face wearing an expression of the utmost gravity as she carefully spread some honey on Hec's bread and butter; Duke, frowning with eagerness to understand some mysterious communication which his neighbour Hoodie was making to him in a low voice, her eyes bright with excitement, her cheeks rosy, and her pretty fat shoulders "shruggled" up, as she bent to whisper to her little brother.

"*What* do you say, Hoodie? I don't under'tand. How could it be all of gold?" were the first words that met Magdalen's ears.

"*Hush*, Duke," said Hoodie, placing her sticky little hand on his mouth, "you're *not* to tell. I didn't say it would be all gold. I said p'raps the little points at the top would be goldy—like the shiny top of the point

on the church. But you're too little to know what I mean. You must wait till—Oh!" with a scream of delight, "*there's* Maudie's godmother! Oh, Maudie's godmother, Maudie's godmother, *have* you got it?"

She was off her seat and in Magdalen's arms in an instant—hugging, jumping, kissing, dancing with eagerness. It was all Magdalen could do not at once to hold out to her the parcel, but her promise to Hoodie's mother must not be broken.

"Yes," she said, "I have got it. But first tell me, Hoodie dear—have you been really a good little girl all the afternoon? Has she, Martin?"

"Oh, trually I've been good—vezzy good—haven't I, Martin?" said Hoodie.

"Yes, Miss. I must really say she has been very good. I don't remember ever having a more peacefuller afternoon," said Martin with great satisfaction.

"I am so glad," said Magdalen. "And you didn't touch the bird, Hoodie?"

"No, oh no, I didn't touch it one bit," said Hoodie earnestly. "I went and lookened at it, but I didn't touch it. Martin will tell you."

"No, Miss, she was quite good. She just stood and peeped at it, but she didn't touch it, I'm sure, for I went with her to your room and stayed there a few minutes while she looked at the bird."

"That was very nice," said Magdalen.

"We didn't let Hec and Duke go," said Hoodie, "for they'd have wanted to touch the bird, wouldn't they? They're so little, you see, and Hec says he likes smooving down the feavers on little birds's backs, so

Martin and me thought we'd better not let them be temptationed to touch the bird."

"Ah, yes, that was very wise. And as Martin stayed with you, you weren't temptationed either, were you, Hoodie?"

Somewhat to her surprise, at this Hoodie grew rather red.

"I didn't stay all the time, Miss," said Martin. "I heard the little boys calling me, so I left Miss Hoodie for a minute or two feeling sure I might trust her."

"So there's nothing to prevent my giving you the cage. That's very nice," said Magdalen. She lifted the funny-looking parcel on to the table and unfastened the paper. There stood the cage—and such a pretty one! It was painted white and green, and greatly and specially to Hoodie's satisfaction the pointed tops of the pagoda-like roof were gilt.

"Didn't I tell you so," she said to Duke in a tone of great superiority, "I told you there'd be goldy points on the top."

"Yes," said Duke, much impressed; "I wonder how you knowed, Hoodie?"

Hoodie tossed her head.

"Knowed, in course I knowed," she said.

Only Hec did not seem as much interested and delighted as the others. He just glanced at the cage and then subsided again to his bread and honey.

"What's the matter with Hec?" said Cousin Magdalen. "He doesn't look as bright as usual, does he, Martin?"

"He's been very quiet all the afternoon," said Martin, "but I don't think he can be ill. He's eaten a good tea, hasn't he, Miss Maudie?"

"*Very*," said Maudie. "Three big slices first—only with butter, you know, and then six with honey. We always have to eat three plain first, on honey days," she added by way of explanation to her cousin.

"*Nine* slices," said Magdalen, opening her eyes. "Martin, isn't that enough to make him ill?"

"Bless you, no, Miss," said Martin, laughing. "As long as it's bread and butter, there's not much fear."

"Or bread and honey," corrected Hoodie. "One day Duke and Hec and me—Maudie wasn't there—one day Duke and Hec and me eatened firty-two slices—Martin counted. It was when we was at the seaside."

"My dear Hoodie!" exclaimed Magdalen, and the astonishment on her face made them all laugh.

The consumption of bread and butter and honey seemed however over for the present, so Magdalen led the way to her own room, followed by Hoodie carrying the precious cage which she would entrust to no other hands, Maudie, the twins, and Martin bringing up the rear.

Magdalen opened the door and crossed the room, which was a large one, to the side window, on the writing-table, in front of which, she had left the basket containing the bird. She had placed it carefully, with a little circle of books round it to prevent the bird's fluttering knocking it over. As she came near the table, she gave an exclamation of surprise and vexation. The circle of books was still there undisturbed, but the basket was no longer in

the centre—indeed, at the first glance Magdalen could not see it at all.

"Oh dear!" she exclaimed. "Where can the basket be? Hoodie, you *surely* didn't touch it?"

The moment she had said the words she regretted them—but just at first she had not time to look at Hoodie to see how she had taken them, for another glance at the table showed her the basket peeping up behind the edge where it had slipped down, though fortunately the table was pushed too near the wall for it to have fallen quite on to the floor.

Magdalen darted forward and carefully drew out the basket, in considerable fear and trembling as to the state of the little bird inside. But to her relief it seemed all right. It had had another fright, no doubt, poor thing—it must have thought life a very queer series of falls and bumps and knocks, I should think, judging by its own experience, but still it seemed to have a happy faculty of recovering itself, and though its position in the toppled-over basket could not have been very comfortable, it looked quite bright and chirpy when Magdalen gently lifted the lid to examine it.

"It is hungry, I'm sure," she said; "can't you give me a little bread soaked in milk for it again, Martin. There's some milk on the nursery table, isn't there?"

"To be sure, Miss," said Martin, starting off at once. To her surprise, as she left the room she felt a hand slipped into hers. It was Hoodie's.

"I'll go with you," said the child, and Martin, thinking she only wanted to go with her to see about the bread and milk, made no objection. It was not till

they reached the nursery that Martin noticed the expression of the little girl's face. It was stormy in the extreme.

"I won't go back to Maudie's godmother's room," she exclaimed. "I won't have the cage. I won't speak to her—nasty, *ugly* Maudie's godmother."

"Miss Hoodie!" said Martin, in amazement and distress. "You speaking that naughty way of your cousin who has been so very nice and kind to you."

"I don't care," said Hoodie, fairly on the way to one of her grandest tempers, "*I* don't care. She's not nice and kind. She doesn't believe what I say. I *toldened* her I didn't touch the basket, and she said I did."

"Oh no, Miss Hoodie, my dear, I'm sure she didn't say that. She only asked you if you were quite sure you didn't. And who could have done it, I'm sure I can't think," said Martin, herself by no means satisfied that Hoodie's indignation was not a sign of her knowing herself to blame. "No one was in the room but you and me this afternoon, for none of the servants ever go near it till dressing time. Besides, they wouldn't go touching the bird. If it had been one of the little boys now. It's just what they might have done, reaching up to get it. But they weren't there at all."

"*I* don't care," reiterated Hoodie. "I didn't do it, but Maudie's godmother doesn't believe me. *I* don't care. But I won't have the cage." And in spite of all Martin could say, the child resolutely refused to leave the nursery.

Hoodie sat there alone, nursing her wrath and bitter feelings.

"*I* don't care," she kept repeating to herself. "Nobody

likes me. I'm alvays naughty. What's the good of being good? I did so want to touch the bird when Martin went out of the room and left me alone, but I didn't, 'cos I'd p'omised. I might as well, 'cos Maudie's godmother doesn't believe me. It's very unkind of God to make it seem that I'm alvays naughty. It's not my fault. *I* don't care."

In Magdalen's room Martin was relating Hoodie's indignation.

"Oh, how sorry I am for saying that," said Magdalen. "It will just make her lose her trust in me. And I do believe her. I'm sure she didn't touch it. Don't you think so, Martin?"

Martin hesitated.

"Yes, Miss, I do think I believe her. Only didn't you notice how red she got when I said I wasn't with her *all* the time in your room this afternoon?"

"Yes," said Magdalen; "but I thought it was just that she felt so eager for me to know she had kept her promise. I *don't* think she touched it, Martin. I really don't. But I am afraid it will be difficult to make her believe I don't."

Just then a sudden sound of weeping made them all start, thinking for a moment that it must be Hoodie herself, who had run back from the nursery. But no—it was not Hoodie—it was Hec. The little fellow had crept under the table unobserved, and there had been listening to the conversation.

"What's the matter, dear? What's the matter, my darling? Don't cry so, Master Hec," said Martin, as she drew him out.

"Poor Hec! Poor little Hec! Has he hurt himself?" exclaimed all the others.

"No, no, I hasn't hurt myself," sobbed Hec. "I'm crying 'cos it was *me*. It was *me* that tumbled the basket down, and Cousin Magdalen 'colded Hoodie. It wasn't poor Hoodie. It was all me."

And for some minutes, conscience-stricken Hec refused to be comforted.



Hec refused to be comforted

CHAPTER X.

FLOWN.

"One flew away, and then there was
none."

THREE LITTLE BIRDS.

Hoodie sat alone in the nursery, wrathful and sore. All the pleasure in the little bird and the beautiful cage seemed to have gone.

"I don't love her neither, not now," she said to herself. "I don't *think*—no, I really don't *think* I love anybody, 'cos nobody loves me, and ev'ybody thinks I'm naughty. Never mind—I'll go away some day. As soon as ever I'm big enough I'll go kite away and never come back again, and I sha'n't care what anybody says then."

There was some comfort though of a rather vague kind in this thought. Hoodie sat swinging her legs backwards and forwards, while queer fancies of where she would go—what she would do, once she was "big enough," chased each other round her busy little brain.

Suddenly a sound in the passage outside the nursery door made her look up just in time to see the door open and Magdalen, leading tearful Hec by the hand, followed by Maudie, Duke, and Martin, come in.

Hoodie looked up with some curiosity.

"Hoodie," said Magdalen, "Hec wants to tell you how sorry he is that you have got blamed on his account. It was he that touched the basket and knocked it

over. He ran into my room to look at the bird without Martin's knowing he had left the nursery, and he was so afraid that he had hurt the little bird, by knocking it over, that he didn't like to tell. Kiss him and speak kindly to him, poor little boy, Hoodie dear. He has been so unhappy."

Hoodie gravely contemplated her little brother, but without giving any signs of obeying her cousin's request.

"*I* have been unhappy too," she said, "and it wasn't my fault. It *was* Hec's."

"Well, then," said Magdalen, "it should make you the more sorry for Hec. He has had the unhappiness of knowing it *was* his fault, which is the worst unhappiness of all."

Hoodie threw back her head.

"*I* don't think so," she said. "I think the worst is when people alvays says you're naughty when you're not."

"I am sorry you thought I said you were naughty when you weren't, Hoodie," said Magdalen, "but you thought I meant more than I did. As soon as I thought about it quietly I felt sure you hadn't touched the basket—and even *more* sure, that if you had been tempted to touch it, you would have said so."

"'Cos Hec toldened you it was him," said Hoodie.

"No, before Hec said a word, I said to Martin I was sure it wasn't you."

Hoodie looked up with a new light in her eyes.

"*Did* you?" she said, as if hardly able to believe it.

"Yes, indeed, Miss Hoodie," said Martin, "Miss King did say so. And very kind of her it was, to trust you so, for you did look very funny when I said you had been a few minutes alone in the room."

Hoodie flamed round upon her.

"It's vezzy nasty of you to say that, Martin," she exclaimed violently. "*Vezzy* nasty. You alvays think I'm naughty. I daresay I did look funny, 'cos I was temptationed, awful temptationed to touch the bird, but I wouldn't, no I *wouldn't*, 'cos I'd p'omised."

And at last her mingled feelings found relief in a burst of sobs.

The sight was too much for Hec, already in a sorely depressed and tearful condition. He threw his arms round Hoodie, nearly dragging her off her chair in his endeavours to get her shaggy head down to the level of his own close-cropped dark one for an embrace.

"Oh Hoodie, Hoodie, *dear* Hoodie, don't cry," he beseeched her. "It's all Hec's fault. Naughty Hec. Oh Hoodie, please 'agive me and kiss me, and I'll never, never touch your bird again."



"Please 'agive me and kiss me."

Hoodie was quite melted.

"Dear Hec—poor Hec," she cried in her turn. "Don't cry, dear Hec," and the two little creatures hugged and kissed and cried, all in one.

"Let's kiss Maudie's godmother too. She didn't think you was naughty, Hoodie," suggested Hec, and Hoodie at once took his advice, so the kissing and hugging were transferred to poor Magdalen, who bore them heroically, till at last she was so very nearly smothered that she was obliged to cry for mercy.

"And let us go back to my room now," she said, "and introduce the little bird to its new house. It hasn't seen it yet, you know, Hoodie."

"*Hasn't* it?" said Hoodie.

"Of course not. The cage is yours—your very own. I waited for you to come before putting the bird in it."

"That was *vezzy* good of you," said Hoodie, approvingly; and as happy and light-hearted as if no temper or trouble of any kind had ever come near her, she took Hec's hand and trotted off with her cousin to help in the installation of the bird in its beautiful cage.

"What funny creatures children are," said Magdalen to herself, "and of them all surely Hoodie is the funniest."

It would be impossible to tell the pleasure that the possession of the little bird gave to Hoodie, and the devotion she showed to it. For some days its cage remained in Miss King's room, that Cousin Magdalen herself might watch how the little creature got on, and there, as Martin said, "morning, noon, and night," Hoodie was to be found. It was the prettiest sight to see her, seated by the table, her elbows resting upon it, and her chubby face leaning on her hands, while her eyes eagerly followed every

movement of her favourite. She was never tired of sitting thus, she was never cross or impatient, nor did she ever attempt to touch the greenfinch without Magdalen's leave. And finding that the little girl was so gentle and obedient, and that the bird gave her such pleasure, Magdalen kindly did her utmost to increase this pleasure. She taught Hoodie how to tame and make friends with her pet, to call to it with her soft little voice—for no one could have a softer or prettier voice than Hoodie when she chose—always in the same tone, till the bird learnt to recognize it and to come at her summons. And oh the delight of the first time this happened! Hoodie was holding out her hand, the forefinger outstretched to the open door of the cage, half-cooing, half-whistling, in the pretty way Magdalen had taught her, when birdie, its head cocked on one side as if half in timidity, half in coquetry, at last mustered up courage and hopped on to the fat little pink finger.

Hoodie *nearly* screamed with delight, but recollected herself just in time not to frighten the bird.

"Oh, Cousin Magdalen," she whispered in the most tremendous excitement, "Him is pouching, him's pouching on my finger. Oh the darling,—look, look, Maudie's godmother."

But before Maudie's godmother could get across the room to look, Mr. Birdie had hopped off its new perch, and the experiment had to be repeated.

"Come and pouch, birdie, dear birdie; *do* come and pouch on my finger," said Hoodie, beseechingly.

"Call it the way I taught you," whispered Magdalen.

Hoodie did so, and at the sound of her well-known

call, the greenfinch cocked its head, looked round on all sides, appeared to consider, and at last condescended again to hop on to its little Mistress's finger.

"Isn't it *sweet*?" said Hoodie ecstatically, though scarcely daring to breathe for fear of disturbing it.

"If you take care never to startle it," said Magdalen, "it will get in the way of coming regularly whenever you call it. *Never* let it hear you speaking angrily or roughly, Hoodie. That would startle it more than anything."

"*Would* it?" said Hoodie, regarding her pet with affection not unmingled with respect. "Would it know I was naughty? Cousin Magdalen," she added, looking up into her friend's face with considerable awe in her bright green eyes; "Cousin Magdalen, do you think *p'raps* my bird's a fairy, and that God sent it to teach me to be good?"

Fortunately by this time Magdalen's intercourse with Hoodie had taught her the necessity of great control of herself. Whatever Hoodie said or did, she must not be laughed at—not even smiled at, if in the smile there lurked the slightest shadow of ridicule. Once let Hoodie imagine she was being made fun of and all hope of leading her and making her love and trust you was over.

So Magdalen's face remained quite grave as she replied to Hoodie's question,

"I think that *everything* nice and pretty that comes to us is sent by God, dear. And He means them all to teach us to be good. But I don't think you need fancy your little bird is a fairy."

"It's *so* clever," said Hoodie. "Fancy him knowing when I call. Do you think some day it'll learn to speak, Cousin Magdalen?"

Cousin Magdalen shook her head.

"I'm afraid not. It isn't the kind of bird that ever learns to speak," she replied, as gravely as before. "But I shouldn't wonder if it learns to know you very well—to come in a moment when it hears you call, and to show you that it is pleased to see you."

"Oh how lovely that'll be," said Hoodie, dancing about with delight. "Fancy it coming on my finger whenever I say 'Birdie dear, come and pouch.' I'll *never* let it hear me speak c'oss, Cousin Magdalen. Whenever I feel *it* coming I'll go out of the room and shut the door tight so it sha'n't hear me."

"Whenever you feel what coming?" asked Magdalen.

"*It,*" repeated Hoodie, "c'ossness, you know. It must come sometimes—*all* chindrel is c'oss *sometimes*," she added complacently.

"Well, but suppose some children were to make up their minds to be cross *no* times," said Magdalen with a smile. "Wouldn't that be a good thing? Suppose a little girl I know, not very far from here, was to set the example."

Hoodie laughed.

"Cousin *Magdalen,*" she said, with an accent on the name that she always gave when amused. "Cousin *Magdalen,* how funny you are! I know who you mean —yes, I do, kite well. But she couldn't, that little girl couldn't help being c'oss *sometimes*."

She shook her head sagaciously.

"Well, any way," said Magdalen, "try and let the 'sometimes' come as seldom as possible. Won't you do that, Hoodie?"

Just then there came a tap at the door.

"Miss Hoodie," said Martin's voice. "Come to tea, please. It's quite ready."

Hoodie gave an impatient shake. Fortunately the bird was no longer on her finger, otherwise its nerves would have been considerably startled. Hoodie had been on the point of putting her hand into the cage to entice it to hop on to her finger and thus to lift it out when Martin's summons came.

"I don't want any tea," she said; "do go away, Martin. You *alvays* come for me when I don't want to go."

"Hoodie," whispered Magdalen, "the bird will be quite frightened to hear you speak like that."

Hoodie looked startled.

"Oh dear," she said. "I quite forgot. You see, Cousin Magdalen, it *will* come. There's no good trying to keep it away."

"Yes, there is," said Magdalen. "There's good in trying to keep it away, and there's good in trying to send it away even after it's come. You're sending it away now, Hoodie, I think."

"Am I?" said Hoodie, doubtfully. Then with a sudden change of tone, "Well, I *will* then. I'll go goodly with Martin. Martin," she said amiably, turning to her nurse, "I'm coming. I'll go out of the room kite goodly and quiet, and then perhaps birdie won't remember about my speaking c'oss."

"I daresay he won't," said Magdalen encouragingly. "I'll give him some fresh seed to eat, as it's rather low in his box, and that will give him something else to think of. But I won't speak to him, Hoodie. I never do, because I want him to learn to know your voice."

"That's out of the Bible," was Hoodie's parting remark, as she went off with Martin, quite "goodly," as she had promised.

Day by day Hoodie loved her bird more and more, and her love was repaid by great success in taming the little creature. It grew to know her wonderfully well, to hop on to her rosy finger when she called to it, adding always, "Birdie, birdie, come and *pouch*," with a soft clear note of delight that it was quite a pleasure to hear. Its cage was placed in the window of a little ante-room, out of which Miss King's room opened. There had been some talk of putting it in the nursery, but Hoodie pleaded against this. The cat *had* been known to enter the nursery, for Hec and Duke were rather fond of old pussy, and Prince was a frequent visitor there. And besides this, Hoodie could not feel quite sure that her little brothers might not be some day "temptationed" to touch her favourite. It was pretty clear any way that birdie's residence in the nursery would be a source of quarrels, so Mother and Magdalen and Martin agreed that the ante-room window would be the best and safest place.

"It isn't as if winter was coming instead of summer," said Magdalen. "In that case a room without a fire would be too cold for it. But every day, now, the weather is getting brighter and warmer. What are you looking so grave about, Hoodie?"

Hoodie looked up solemnly.

"I were just thinking," she replied, "what a pity it would be if winter comed back again instead of summer, just when we've settled about my bird so nicely—by mistake you know."

"But winter and summer don't come of themselves, Miss Hoodie," said Martin. "You know God sends them, and He never makes mistakes."

"But *supposing* He did," said Hoodie, "you are so stupid, Martin. You might *suppose*."

"Hoodie!" said Magdalen, warningly.

Hoodie gave a wriggle, but said no more. Not that she was vanquished however. She waited till bed-time, and then, after saying aloud as usual her little evening prayer, added a special clause for Martin's edification. "And p'ease, dear God, be sure not to forget to send the nice warm summer for my little bird, and don't let cold winter come back again by mistake."

"It'll do no harm to *'amind* God, any way," she observed with satisfaction, as she lay down in bed and composed herself for her night's repose.

Weeks passed on and the nice warm summer came. Hoodie's devotion to her bird seemed to increase as time went on, and so much of her time was spent beside its cage that the nursery peace and quiet were much greater than before its arrival.

One day, just after the nursery breakfast, she hastened to her pet as usual. Rather to her vexation she saw that her two little brothers were standing by the cage, of which the door was open, Miss King beside them. Hoodie frowned, but did not venture to say anything.

"See, Hoodie," said Magdalen, "see how very confiding birdie has learnt to be. He has actually hopped on to Duke's finger when he whistled to him the way you do. It will do him no harm now to be friendly to other people too—now that he knows you so well. Look at him."

"See, Hoodie," cried Duke in delight, holding up his stumpy little forefinger, on which birdie was contentedly perched.

An ugly black cloud came over Hoodie's face. She darted forward, furious with anger.

"I *won't* have him pouch on your finger, Duke," she cried. "I won't have *anybody* call him but me. I won't. I won't—he's the only thing that loves me and nobody's to touch him. Go away, naughty Duke; ugly Duke."

She pushed Duke aside with one hand and with the other attempted, gently, notwithstanding her passion, to take the bird. The window was wide open, and the children were standing beside it. Magdalen, who was at the other side of the table on which stood the cage, hurried forward, but too late. Startled by Hoodie's loud voice, not recognizing in the furious little girl its gentle mistress, and with some instinct of self-preservation, the greenfinch, with a frightened uncertain note, flew off Duke's finger, alighted for one instant on the window-sill, from which it seemed for a moment to look at the group in the room, as if in farewell, then, before Magdalen could do anything, before Hoodie had taken in the idea of the misfortune that threatened her, raised its pretty wings with another soft reproachful note, and flew away—away out in the bright sunny garden, over the bushes and flowers,

away—away—to some leafy corner up among the high trees, where there would be no angry voices to startle it, no quarrelsome children to frighten its tender little heart—no sound but the soft brush of the squirrel's furry tail among the branches, and the gentle flutter of the summer breeze. Away, away! But what did that "away" mean to poor broken-hearted Hoodie?

She stood motionless with surprise and horror—she did not dart to the window as one would have expected—ready almost to throw herself out of it in fruitless pursuit of her favourite—she stood perfectly still, as if turned into stone. But the expression on her face was so strange and unnatural that Miss King felt frightened.

"Hoodie," she exclaimed. "Hoodie, child, don't stand like that. Come to the window and call to your bird. Perhaps he will hear you and fly back."

She said it more to rouse Hoodie out of the depth of her misery than because she really thought the bird would return, for in the bottom of her heart she feared much that it had truly flown away, and that once it felt itself out in the open air its natural instinct of freedom would prevent its returning to its cage.

Hoodie started.

"Come back? Do you *think* he'll come back, Cousin Magdalen?" she exclaimed, and rushing to the window, and leaning out so far that Magdalen was obliged to hold her for fear she should fall over, she gave the soft clear call which her cousin had taught her—over and over again, till, tired and out of breath, she drew in her head and looked up in

Magdalen's face despairingly.

"He won't come," she said, "he won't come. P'raps he's flied away too far to hear me. P'raps he can hear me but he doesn't want to come. Oh dear, *oh* dear, what shall I do? My bird, my bird—you always said he would fly away if he heard me speak c'oss, and I did speak c'oss, dedful c'oss. *Oh!* what shall I do?"

Hoodie sank down on the floor—a little heap of tears and misery. Hec and Duke flung their arms around her, beseeching her not to cry so, but there was no comfort for Hoodie.

"It was my own fault," she kept repeating, "my own fault for speaking so c'oss. The bird will never come back. Oh no, Hec and Duke, dear Hec and Duke, it isn't no good kissing me. I'll never, never be happy again, and it's my own fault."

It was impossible not to be sorry for her. Magdalen felt almost ready to burst into tears herself. She took Hoodie up in her arms and tried to comfort her.

"I don't think you should quite lose heart about birdie, Hoodie. He may come back again, once he has had a good fly. We must keep the window open, and you must keep calling to him every now and then, in the way he is used to. And perhaps it would be a good plan to go out in the garden and call—he may perhaps have flown up among the trees at the other side."

Hoodie was only too ready. Patiently, while her cousin went down to her breakfast, the little girl stood at the window calling to the truant. Every now and then the sobs that would continue to rise, made a sad little quaver in the middle, and once or twice

poor Hoodie was obliged to stop altogether. But she soon began again, and every now and then between her whistles, she said in a beseeching, half heart-broken tone—

"Oh, birdie, *won't* you come? Come, dear birdie, oh *do* come and pouch on my finger. I'll never, never speak c'oss again—never, dear birdie, if only you'll come back and pouch on my finger."

It was very melancholy. Very melancholy too was the walking about the garden in vain hopes that birdie might be somewhere near and would fly down again. The whole day passed most sadly. Hoodie's eyes were swollen with crying, and she could scarcely eat any dinner or tea, and her distress naturally was felt by all the nursery party. It was one of the saddest days the children had ever known, and they all went to bed with sorely troubled little hearts.

Magdalen too was grieved and sorry.

"I blame myself," she said to Hoodie's mother. "Pets are always a risk, and Hoodie is such a strange mixture that one shouldn't run risks with her. I wish I had never suggested her keeping the bird as a pet, but I thought it might be good for her to have something of her very own to care for and attend to."

"And so it was," said Hoodie's mother. "It has done her a great deal of good; it has softened her wonderfully. We all noticed it. And even this trouble may do her good; it may teach her really to try to master that sad temper of hers."

"I had no idea she would have been so put out at Duke's playing with her bird," Magdalen went on, "or I would not have risked it."

"But she *should* not have been put out at it," said Mrs. Caryll. "You have nothing whatever to reproach yourself with, dear Magdalen. Hoodie *must* be taught that she cannot be allowed to yield to that selfish, jealous temper."

"I know," said Magdalen. "But how are we to teach her? that is the difficulty—the least severity or sternness which does good to other children, seems to rouse her very worst feelings and only to harden her. She is not hardened now, poor little soul, she is perfectly humble. Oh, how I do wish I could find her bird for her!"

"Don't trouble yourself so much about it, dear. You really must not," said Mrs. Caryll, as she bade her cousin good night.

But unfortunately those things which our friends beg us not to trouble ourselves about are generally the very things we find it the most impossible to put out of our minds. Magdalen could not leave off "troubling" about poor Hoodie. She slept little, and when she did sleep it was only to dream of the lost bird, sometimes that it was found again in all sorts of impossible places—sometimes that Hoodie was climbing a dreadfully high mountain, or attempting to swim across a deep river, where Magdalen felt that she would certainly be drowned,—in search of it. And once she dreamt that the bird flew into her room and perched at the foot of her bed, and when she exclaimed with delight at seeing it again it suddenly began to speak to her, and its voice sounded exactly like Hoodie's.

"I have come to say good-bye to you, Maudie's godmother," it said. "Nobody loves me, and I am always naughty, so I'd better go away."

And as Magdalen started up to catch the bird, or Hoodie, whichever it was—in her dream it seemed both—she awoke.

It was bright daylight already, though only five o'clock. Outside in the garden the sun was shining beautifully, the air, as Magdalen opened her window, felt deliciously fresh and sweet, everything had the peaceful untroubled look of very early morning—of a very early spring morning especially—when the birds and the flowers and the sunshine and the breezes have had it all to themselves, as it were, undisturbed by the troubles and difficulties and disagreements that busy day is sure to bring with it, as long as there are men and women, and boys and girls, in this puzzling world of ours.

Though, after all, it is better to be a child than a bird or a flower—whatever mistakes we may make, whatever wrong we may do, all, alas, adding to the great mass of mistakes and wrong—whatever sorrows we may have to bear, it is something to feel in us the power of bearing them, the power of *trying* to put right even what we may have helped to put wrong—best of all the power of loving each other, and of helping each other in a way that the happy, innocent birds and flowers know nothing about. Is it not better to be *ourselves*, after all?

Magdalen leant out of the window, enjoying the sweet air and sunshine, but thinking all the time how much more she would have enjoyed this bright morning but for her sympathy with poor Hoodie's trouble.

Suddenly a thought struck her. *Possibly* the bird, chilled and hungry after some hours' freedom, unaccustomed to be out in the dark, or to find food

for itself—*possibly* he might have returned to his cage in the night. Magdalen threw on her dressing-gown and hurried into the ante-room. The window was open, the cage-door stood open too, everything was ready to welcome the little wanderer—fresh seed in the box, fresh water in the glass—Hoodie had seen to it all herself before going to bed—but that was all!

There was no little feathered occupant in the cage—it was empty, and with a fresh feeling of disappointment, Magdalen stood by the window again, looking out at the bright morning, and wondering what she could do to comfort poor Hoodie. Outside, the birds were singing merrily.

"Should I get her another bird?" thought Magdalen, "a canary, perhaps, accustomed to cage life? No, I think not. It might only lead to fresh disappointment; besides, I don't think Hoodie is the sort of child to care for another, *instead*. No, that wouldn't do."

Suddenly a sort of flutter in the leaves round the window-frame—Mr. Caryll's house was an old one; there were creepers all over the walls—made Magdalen look up.

"Can there be a nest in the eaves?" she said to herself, for the flutter was evidently that of a bird; and as she was watching, she saw it fly out—fly down rather from the projecting window-roof, and—to her amazement, after seeming for an instant or two to hesitate, it summoned up courage and flew a little way into the room—too high up for her to reach however, and not far enough into the room for her to venture to shut the window. She stood breathless, for as it at last settled for a moment on the curtain-rod, she saw what at first she had scarcely ventured to believe, that it was Hoodie's bird.

It stayed a moment on the rod, then it flew off again —made a turn round the room—"oh," thought Magdalen, "if it *would* but settle somewhere further from the window, so that I could shut it in"—But no, off it flew again—out into the open air, and Magdalen's heart sank. Patience! Another moment and it was back again, with designs on its cage apparently, but it hesitated half way. Now was the critical moment. Magdalen hesitated. Should she risk it? She stretched out her hand towards the bird and softly and tremulously whistled to it in Hoodie's well-known call. The wavering balance of birdie's intentions was turned—it cocked its head on one side, and with a pretty chirp flew towards Magdalen and perched on her finger! Slowly and cautiously, whistling softly all the time, she slipped her hand into the cage, and quickly withdrawing it the instant birdie hopped off he found himself caught.



"Slowly and cautiously, whistling softly all the time"

But he seemed quite content, and in two moments was pecking at his seed as if nothing had happened.

CHAPTER XI.

HOODIE'S DISOBEDIENCE.

"Where are the pretty primroses gone,
That lately bloomed in the wood?"

Notwithstanding her troubles, on account of them partly, perhaps, for nothing tires out little children more than long crying, Hoodie slept soundly that night. She was still sleeping when, at seven o'clock, Magdalen, already dressed and with the cage in her hand, came into her room to watch for her waking.

Martin, who had heard the joyful news an hour ago, stood with Miss King beside the little girl's bed and looked at her. Poor Hoodie! Her rosy face still bore traces of yesterday's weeping, and now and then through her sleep one heard that little sobbing catch in her breathing which is, to my thinking, one of the most piteous sounds in the world.

"She's tired herself out," said Martin. "She may sleep another hour or more. You'll be tired standing there, miss. Who would think Miss Hoodie had it in her to take things to heart so, for to see her sometimes she's like as if she had no heart or love in her at all."

"I think I'll put the cage on a chair beside the bed," said Magdalen, "and then she'll be sure to see it the moment she wakes."

She did so and went quietly away. Half an hour later, coming back again to see if Hoodie was still sleeping, she heard as she opened the door the sound of the

little girl's voice. She had just awakened and had discovered the return of her bird. She was in an ecstasy of delight, very pretty to hear and see.

"Oh my darling little bird," she was saying, "oh my sweet, innocent pet, have you come back? oh my dear, *dear* bird! You didn't mean to go away from Hoodie, did you? You lost your way, didn't you? Hoodie will never speak c'oss again, birdie, *never*. I do think God is vezzy kind to send you back again, and I *will* try to please Him by being good, 'cos He's so kind."

Magdalen stood still and watched her, with pleasure, but with a strange sort of slight sadness and misgiving too. There was something almost startling in the little girl's extreme love for the bird, and it made her cousin wish it could be bestowed on a higher object.

"Why can't she love her sister and brothers more?" she thought to herself. "I do not know what she would do now if anything again happened to the bird. I wonder if it would have been better if it had not come back. But no, I must not think that. *All* love must do good to a nature like Hoodie's, and her love for the bird may teach her other things. And oh, I should have been sorry to leave her while she was as unhappy as she was yesterday."

Then she came forward into the room, and when Hoodie saw her, there was a fresh cry of delight, and Magdalen had to tell her over and over again exactly how it had all happened; how it was that she was up so early, how birdie flew in and then out again, and how Magdalen feared that after all she might not be able to catch him, and how delighted she was when she felt sure she had got him safe.

"I was so glad to think how pleased you would be, Hoodie, dear!" she said.

"Thank you, Cousin Magdalen, you are vezzy kind," said Hoodie. "And I think God is vezzy kind too, for you know I said my prayers to Him last night to send birdie back again, so He must have told him to come. P'raps He sent a' angel to show birdie the way. I'm going to be vezzy good now, Cousin Magdalen, *awful* good, always, 'cos God was kind and sent birdie back. *Won't* God be glad?"

"Yes, dear, God is always glad when His little children are good. He likes them to be happy, and being good is the only way," said Magdalen.

"But won't He be *dedfully* glad for me to be kite good?" said Hoodie, seemingly not quite satisfied with her cousin's tone. "I wouldn't have tried so much if He hadn't sent birdie back, but now I'm going to try awful hard."

"But, Hoodie dear, even if God hadn't sent birdie back it would have been right to try as hard as ever you could," said Magdalen. "That's what I wish you could understand—even when God *doesn't* do what we ask Him we should try to please Him. For He loves us just the same—better than if He did what we ask, for He knows that sometimes what we ask wouldn't be good for us. I don't think you understand that, Hoodie dear. You think when your mother, or Martin perhaps, doesn't do all at once what you ask, that it is because they don't love you. You mustn't feel that way, dear, either about your friends here, or about God, your best friend of all."

Hoodie looked up, rather puzzled. Magdalen feared she had not understood what she said, and almost

regretted having said it. And afterwards she wondered what had put it into her mind to try to explain to the little girl what puzzles and bewilders far wiser people, but by the time that "afterwards" came she no longer regretted having said what she had.

"I do think God loves me now," said Hoodie, sturdily, "'cos He's sent birdie back, and so I'm going to try to be good. But if I was God I'd *alvays* do what ev'ybody asked me, and I'd *make* it be good for them, and then ev'ybody would be so pleased, they'd always try to be good."

"I'm afraid not, Hoodie," said Magdalen with a slight smile. "I'm afraid if everybody always got what they want there would soon be very little goodness left anywhere."

Hoodie at this looked more puzzled than before, but Magdalen, who had been speaking more to herself than to the child this time, did not try to explain any more. She bent over Hoodie and kissed her.

"Any way don't forget about trying to be good, and ask God to help you," she said.

The next day "Maudie's godmother" went away. She had stayed longer than she had intended, and now her father and mother could spare her no longer. The children were greatly distressed at her going. Maudie cried gently, the boys more uproariously, and all three joined in reproaching Hoodie for not crying at all. Hoodie seemed quite indifferent to their remarks.

"Why should I cry?" she said. "It would be very silly to cry when Cousin Magdalen is going back to her father and mother. Crying isn't any good."

"You don't love Cousin Magdalen," said Maudie, "if you did you couldn't help crying."

"I *do* love her. I love her as many times as you do, ugl"——

She stopped—Magdalen was looking at her with a look that Hoodie understood. Hoodie ran to her and threw her arms round her neck.

"I *do* love you, Cousin Magdalen," she whispered. "Don't you believe me? I do love you, and I'm trying dedfully to be good, to please you and God, 'cos of birdie coming back."

"I do believe you, dear," said Magdalen, and Hoodie glanced round with triumph.

I am coming now to a part of Hoodie's history which I cannot prevent being rather sad. I wish, for some reasons, I could prevent it. But true stories must be told true, and even fancy stories must be told in a fancy true way, or else they do not suit themselves. When I was a little girl I never cared for the new-fashioned "Red Riding Hood" story; the one in which she was *not* eaten up at the end after all, but saved by a wood-cutter at the last minute. Of course it was very nice to think of poor Red Riding Hood not being eaten up, if one could have managed to believe it. But somehow I never could, and even now whenever I think of the story the old original ending, dreadful as it was, always comes back to me. So now that I am telling you about—not Red Riding Hood—but my queer, fanciful, but still I hope lovable, Hoodie, I feel that I must go straight on and tell you what really happened, even though it makes you rather sad.

For some time after Miss King left, things went on

pretty smoothly, very smoothly, perhaps I should say. Hoodie did not forget about trying to be good, especially in her bird's presence. It became a sort of conscience to her, and as, by a law which is a great help in learning to be good,—though also a danger the more in learning *wrong*,—by the law of *habit*, every time one tries to keep under one's ill temper, makes it easier for the next time, it grew really easier for Hoodie to check her naughty cross words and looks from the way she kept them down when beside her little pet. And Martin and every one began to think it had been a happy thing for Hoodie and those about her that her cousin had taught her how to tame and care for the pretty greenfinch.

It was so pretty, poor little birdie! It grew so tame that, with the window shut of course, it spent a great part of its time flying freely about the ante-room where stood its cage. It would "pouch" not only on Hoodie's finger but on her shoulder, her head—anywhere she chose to place it. And in an instant, at the sound of her call, it would fly to her. Every morning it was her first thought, every night her last. And night and morning when she said her prayers, she never forgot to thank God for being "*so* kind as to send birdie back again," and to beg Him to keep birdie safe and well.

One evening—how it happened I cannot tell,—it was very hot and sultry weather, with thunder about, and at such times people are careless about closing doors and windows—one evening, by some mischance which no one ever could explain, the window of "birdie's room," as it had come to be called, was either left open, or flew open in some way. Hoodie was sure she had closed it when she went to bid her pet good night, but it was what is called a lattice

window, and these are apt to fly open unless very firmly shut. Birdie was safe in his cage however, and the door of *that* was fortunately—even when you hear what happened, children, you will agree with me that that part of it *was* fortunate—quite fastened. Early next morning, one of the servants who slept in an attic above the ante-room, heard a noise below. She was a kind-hearted girl, and her first thought was of Miss Hoodie's bird. She got up at once, and hurrying down-stairs—it was not so very early after all, nearly six o'clock—ran to the ante-room. As she opened the door, to her horror a great big strange cat jumped out of the window.

"Oh dear, oh dear," said Lucy, "can he have got at birdie?"

The cage was not to be seen—but in another moment Lucy spied it on the floor, knocked down off the table by the cruel cat. He had not got at birdie—birdie lay in one corner, quite still as if dead, and yet when Lucy with trembling fingers unfastened the cage door and tenderly lifted out his little occupant, she could see no injury, not the slightest scratch.

"His heart's beating still," she said, "perhaps it's only the fright of the fall," and she was turning to the window to examine birdie more closely, when a sound behind her made her start, and turning round she saw in the doorway the bird's little mistress, poor Hoodie herself. She was in her nightgown only—she had run from her room with her little bare feet, having heard Lucy passing down-stairs, with an instinct of fear that some evil had befallen her pet.

"Lucy, Lucy," she cried, "what is the matter? It isn't anything the matter with birdie. Oh, dear Lucy, *don't* say it is."

Her voice somehow, as Lucy said afterwards, sounded like that of a grown-up person—all the babyishness seemed to have gone out of it—she did not cry, she stood there white as a sheet, clasping her hands in a way that went to Lucy's heart.

"Oh, Miss Hoodie," she replied, the tears running down her face, for she was very tender-hearted, "oh dear, Miss Hoodie, don't take on so. I hope birdie's not badly hurt. The cat didn't touch him. It knocked over the cage, and it must have been the fall; but *perhaps* he's more frightened than hurt."

"Give him to me, Lucy," said Hoodie. "Let me hold him in my own hands. Oh, birdie dear, oh, birdie darling, don't you know me?" for birdie lay still and limp—almost as if dead already. Hoodie, forcing back the tears, whistled her usual call to him, and as its sound reached his ears, birdie seemed to quiver, raised his head, feebly flapped his wings, and tried, with a piteous attempt at shaking off the sleep from which he would never again awake, tried to rouse himself and to struggle to his feet.

"Oh, Lucy," cried Hoodie, "he's getting better," but as she said the words, birdie fell over on his side, uttered the feeblest of chirps, and with a little quiver lay still—quite still—he was dead. The fright had killed him.

Hoodie looked up in Lucy's face with tearless eyes.

"Is he dead?" she said.

"Yes, Miss Hoodie dear," said Lucy, softly stroking the ruffled feathers, "he is dead, but oh dear, Miss Hoodie, it isn't so bad as if the cat had torn and scratched him all over. You should think of that."

But Hoodie could think of nothing in the shape of comfort. She held the little dead bird out to Lucy.

"Take him and bury him," she said. "He can't love me any more, so take him away. All the loving's dead. He was the only thing that loved me. I won't try to be good any more. God is very unkind."

"Miss Hoodie!" exclaimed Lucy, considerably shocked. But Hoodie just looked at her with a hard set expression in her white face.

"You don't understand," she said. "Take him away and bury him."

She turned to the door and left the room. She went slowly back to her own room, and got into her little bed again. Then, like the old Hebrew king, poor little English Hoodie "turned her face to the wall," and wept and wept as if never again there could be for her brightness in the sunshine, or love and happiness in life.

"My bird, my bird," she moaned. That was all she could say.

She refused at first to get up and be dressed. Then, with an idea perhaps that if she did so she would be more independent than if staying in bed, with papa and mamma and Martin and everybody coming to talk to her, and try to comfort her, she slowly got out of bed and let Martin dress her. But when it came to saying her prayers, she altogether refused to do so, and on this point there was no getting her to give in. She did not refuse to eat her breakfast, because she had sense enough to know that sooner or later she would be obliged to eat, but the moment it was swallowed, she took her little chair and seated

herself in the corner of the nursery, her face to the wall, crying, crying steadily, and hopelessly, turning like a little fury upon any one who ventured to speak to her, only moaning out from time to time—

"My bird, oh my bird!"

They were all very sorry for her. Maudie's tears and those of the little boys had flowed freely when the sad story was first told to them; they had all rushed to Hoodie to try to kiss and comfort her. But her extreme crossness, or what any way looked like it to them, sent them away puzzled and hurt. Hoodie's mother had proposed that the little girl should spend the whole day down-stairs with her, have dinner at the dining-room luncheon, and go a drive in the afternoon, but to all this Hoodie only replied by a determined shake of the head, as well as to her father's offer of a new bird, or two if she liked, the prettiest that could be bought.

So they were all really at their wits' end.

It was very sad, but one must also allow that it was very tiresome. Martin began to fear that the child would really make herself ill, and as was Martin's "way," her anxiety began to make her rather cross.

"I wish Miss King had never put it into the child's head to have a pet bird," she muttered to herself as she was washing up the tea-things that evening, glancing at Hoodie's disconsolate figure still in the corner of the nursery. "Miss King may be all very well and kind, but she's no knowledge of children, how should she have any? I think it's much best to leave children to them that understands them; though indeed as for any one's understanding Miss Hoodie——!"

Fortunately it did not occur to Hoodie to make any objection to going to bed, and it was a relief to every one to know of her being there and safely asleep, "forgetting her troubles for a while," as Martin said. The next day was very little better. Hoodie did not cry quite so much, but she still sat in a corner doing nothing, and when any one attempted to speak to her, however kindly, she turned upon them with fierceness, like a little ill-tempered cat.

Yet it was not ill-temper; it was really misery, or at least it was ill-temper caused by misery. But as no gentleness and patience, no sympathy or attempt at comforting her did any good, but harm—and as any approach to reasoning with her, or scolding her, seemed to harden her already embittered little heart more and more, what was to be done, what could be done, but leave her alone? She continued determinedly to refuse, night and morning, to say her prayers, and refused, too, to say grace at the nursery table when it was her turn. But of all this Mrs. Caryll wisely desired Martin to take no notice, and not to try to force the child to any formal utterance of words in which her heart had no part.

"It *must* be all right again soon if only we are patient with her," said Hoodie's mother, more cheerfully than she was really feeling, for she saw that Martin was very much worried and distressed about Hoodie, and she was anxious to encourage her.

"It is to be hoped so, ma'am, I'm sure," was Martin's rather hopeless reply.

Somewhat to everybody's surprise, on the third day Hoodie condescended to ask a favour. Might she go out for a walk alone with Lucy? Everybody was so enchanted at her seeming to take interest in anything

or wishing for anything, that with some conditions her request was at once granted. It was arranged that she should set off with Lucy and go wherever she wished, with the understanding that she would meet Martin and the other children at four o'clock at a certain point on the road, as it was not convenient that Lucy should stay out longer. To this Hoodie agreed.

"I'm going through the wood," she said. "I want to get some flowers that grow there, and Lucy must take a basket and a knife to dig them up, and then I'll tell her what to do."

"Very well, Miss Hoodie," said Martin, but privately she told Lucy not to let the little girl go to the cottages at the edge of the wood, for Martin had never forgotten the fright of Hoodie's escapade several months ago. "If she gets in the way of going to that young woman's cottage, she'll be for ever running off," she said. "So silly of the people to encourage her, when they might see we didn't like it. We met the young woman the other day, and she actually stopped short in the road and began asking when Miss Hoodie was coming to see her again."

"But mamma says they're very respectable people, Martin," said Maudie, who was standing by. "I don't think she would mind if Hoodie did go to see them. Papa said one day he wished the young woman's husband was one of our men. He's so steady."

"Hold your tongue, Miss Maudie," said Martin with unusual sharpness. She knew that what the child said was true, but she had taken a prejudice against the little family in Red Riding Hood's cottage, as the children always called it, and when a good conscientious woman of Martin's age and character

once takes a prejudice, it is rather a hopeless matter!

Poor Maudie slid away, feeling in her turn that things were rather hard upon her. She had been very patient and gentle with her strange-tempered little sister these three days, and had tried not to feel hurt at Hoodie's indifference to all her small overtures of sympathy. And now to be told by Martin to hold her tongue when all she meant was to try to make things better, was not easy to bear.

"I'm sure Hoodie wants to get flowers to put on birdie's grave," she thought to herself, as she wiped away the tears called forth by Martin's sharp words. "I think she *might* have told me about it and asked me to go too."

But she said nothing about it, and set off uncomplainingly on her solitary walk with Martin, for the two little boys were spending the afternoon with the children at the Rectory.

Hoodie marched Lucy straight off to the wood. Primroses were the flowers on which her heart was set, for birdie's grave, as Maudie had guessed. She had seen them growing in the wood in the spring in great numbers and beauty, and no flower, she had settled in her mind, could look so pretty on birdie's grave. She said very little to Lucy, having satisfied herself that the knife to dig the roots up with and the basket to carry them home in had not been forgotten, she walked along in silence. But when they reached the wood and had gone some little way into it and no primroses were to be seen Hoodie looked very much disappointed.

"There were such lots," she said to herself.

"Lots of what, Miss Hoodie?" asked Lucy, thinking her charge the oddest child she had ever had to do with.

"Of p'imroses," said Hoodie. "That's what I came for, to plant them on birdie's grave, you know, Lucy."

"Primroses," repeated Lucy. "Of course not now, Miss Hoodie. They're over long ago. See, these are their leaves—lots of them."

She stooped as she spoke, and pointed out the primrose plants clustering thickly at their feet. Hoodie stooped too, to look at them.

"Oh dear," she exclaimed. "Are the flowers all gone? What shall I do? If we unplanted one, Lucy, and took it home, and watered it *lots*, twenty times a day p'raps, wouldn't more flowers come?"



"Oh dear," she exclaimed. "Are the flowers all gone?"

"Not this year, Miss Hoodie," said Lucy. "Not all the watering in the world would make any flowers come before the spring, and watering too much would kill the plant altogether."

"Oh dear," repeated Hoodie, "what shall I do?"

"Won't no other flowers do?" said Lucy. "There's violets still, and lots of others in the garden that Hopkins would give you—much prettier than primroses."

"No," said Hoodie, shaking her head, "none but p'imroses would do. Birdie liked them best, I know, for when I put some once in the wires of his cage, he chirped. When will the spring come, Lucy?"

"Not for a good bit, Miss Hoodie," said Lucy, "it's only July now. There's all the summer to go through, and then autumn when it begins to get cold, and then all the cold winter, before the spring comes. A good while—eight months, and there's more than four weeks in each month, you know."

"I can't help it," said Hoodie, "only p'imroses will do. Please dig some roots up, Lucy, and we'll plant them on birdie's grave. The green leaves are a little pretty, and in the spring the flowers will come. And if I'm dead before the spring," she added solemnly, "you mustn't forget to water them all the same."

"Miss Hoodie!" said Lucy, reproachfully, "you should not talk that way really. Your mamma wouldn't like it."

"Why not?" said Hoodie, "there's lots about deadening in the Bible and in the church books, so it can't be naughty. I wouldn't mind, if only I thought birdie was in heaven."

"We'd better be going on," said Lucy, rather anxious to give a turn to the conversation, "or we'll be late for Martin and Miss Maudie. I've got up two nice roots, and we may see some others that take your

fancy as we go on."

They made their way slowly through the wood—Hoodie peering about here and there in search of primroses still, some two or three might, she thought, possibly have been left behind, or some buds might by mistake have bloomed later than their neighbours. For Hoodie, as you have seen, was not easily convinced of anything that she did not wish to believe.

But all her peering was in vain; they reached the end of the little wood without a single primrose showing its pretty face, and Hoodie was obliged to content herself with the brightest and freshest plants they could find, which Lucy good-naturedly dug up for her.

At the edge of the wood, the path led them in front of the cottage to which three or four months ago Hoodie's memorable visit had been paid. Lucy walked on quickly, talking of other things in hope of distracting the little girl's attention till the forbidden ground was safely passed. Vain hope. Hoodie came to a dead stand in front of the little garden gate.

"That is the cottage where baby and its mother and the ugly man live," she announced to Lucy. "Once, a long time ago, I went there to tea. Baby's mother asked me to come again some day."

"But not to-day, Miss Hoodie," said poor Lucy, nervously "we'd be too late if we stopped now."

"No, not to-day," said Hoodie. "I don't want to go to-day. I'm too unhappy about birdie to care for cakes now. I don't think I'll ever care for cakes any more. Besides," with a slight hesitation, "she won't have any

ready. She said I was to let her know. *P'raps* I'll let her know some day."

She was turning to walk on, immensely to Lucy's relief, when the gleam of some pale yellow flowers growing close under the cottage walls, up at the other end of the long narrow strip of garden, caught her glance.

"Lucy," she cried. "I see some p'imroses in the garden. I must run in and ask baby's mother to give me some. I'm sure she will."

She unfastened the wooden gate and was some steps up the path before Lucy had time to reply.

"They're not primroses, Miss Hoodie," she said. "Indeed they're not. I can see from here. They're quite another kind. Oh, do come back, Miss Hoodie."

"I won't be a minute," said Hoodie, "I'd like some of the flowers any way," and she began to run on again.

"Miss Hoodie," cried Lucy, driven to despair, "Martin said you mustn't on no account go into the cottage."

Hoodie's wrath and self-will were instantly aroused.

"Well then, Martin had no business to say so," she replied. "*Mamma* never said I wasn't to go. She said I should go some day to see the baby again and to thank baby's mother."

"But not by yourself—without Martin, Miss Hoodie. Your mamma always tells you to be obedient to Martin, I know."

Hoodie vouchsafed no answer, but marched on, up the little garden path towards the house. Lucy looked after her in dismay. What should she do? Following

her and repeating Martin's orders would probably only make Hoodie still more determined. Besides, Lucy was a very gentle, civil girl; it was very disagreeable to her to think of going into the cottage, and telling the owners of it that the child had been forbidden to speak to them, and she gazed round her in perplexity, heartily wishing that Miss Hoodie had not chosen her for her companion in her walk. Suddenly, some distance off, coming across the fields, she perceived two figures, a tall one and a little one. Lucy had good eyes.

"Martin and Miss Maudie," she exclaimed, with relief, and just glancing back to see that Hoodie was by this time inside the cottage, she ran as fast as she could to meet the new comers and tell of Hoodie's disobedience.

She was all out of breath by the time she got up to them, though they hastened their steps when they saw her coming—and at first Martin could not understand what Lucy was saying. When she did so, she was exceedingly put out.

"Run into the cottage, has she, Lucy?" she exclaimed. "And after all I said! I really do think you might have managed her better, naughty though she is. Oh dear me, I do wish she hadn't been allowed to come out without me."

Maudie stood by in great trouble at Hoodie's misdoing.

"Martin will be so cross to her," she thought, "and Hoodie will speak naughtily, I'm sure. I'll run on to the cottage first and tell her how vexed Martin is, and beg her to come back quick and say she's sorry."

And before Martin and Lucy noticed what she was doing, she was half way across the fields to the cottage.

The door stood open when she got there. Maudie peeped into the kitchen but saw no one. "Hoodie," she called out softly, "are you there?"

No answer.

"Hoodie," called Maudie again, more loudly, "I've come to fetch you. Martin's just coming."

Then Hoodie's voice sounded from above.

"I'm up here, Maudie. I came up here 'cos there was no one in the kitchen. And baby's mother doesn't want me to stay 'cos poor baby's ill, so I'll come."

Maudie could not, however, clearly distinguish what Hoodie said, so, guided by the sound of Hoodie's voice, she in turn mounted the ladder-like staircase which led to the sleeping-room above. Hoodie was just preparing to come down, but when Maudie made her appearance she drew back a little into the room.

"Baby's mother won't let me nurse baby," she said, "'cos she's ill, though I'm sure I wouldn't hurt her. Do look at her, Maudie. You can't think how pretty she is when she's well—but her face is very red to-day—baby's mother thinks she's getting her teeth."

Maudie approached rather timidly. Certainly the baby's face was very red.

"Please, miss," said its mother, "I think you'd better not stay. It's very kind of you, and I'm that sorry I can't tell you, to ask you to go."

"I've only *just* come up-stairs," said Hoodie. "I waited ever so long in the kitchen, 'cos I thought baby's mother was out, and that she'd come in soon. And then I called out and I heard she was up-stairs, so I came up, but she won't let me touch baby and I can nurse her so nicely."

"It isn't for that, miss," said Mrs. Lizzie in distress; "it's only *for fear* there should be anything catchin' about her. Doctor saw her yesterday and thought it was only her teeth, still it's best to be careful."

"Yes, thank you," said Maudie, "I think we'd better go. Perhaps we'll come again when baby's better. Come, Hoodie."

With some difficulty she got Hoodie away, for though considerably offended with baby's mother, Hoodie was much more inclined to stay and argue it out with her, than to give in quietly. At the foot of the stair they met Martin; Maudie explained things to her, and Martin's face grew very grave. She was too really alarmed to be cross.

"Run out at once," she said, "both of you, into the open air, and stay in the field till I come; I have sent Lucy home. Better know the worst at once," she added to herself, as she climbed the steep little stair, "oh dear, oh dear! who ever would have thought of such a thing?"

CHAPTER XII.

HOODIE AWAKES.

"And till we're nice old ladies
We'll love each other so."

When Martin joined the two little girls again, her face looked not only grave, but white. Maudie felt frightened, she hardly knew why. Hoodie, in a state of defiance to meet the expected scolding, was so amazed at its not coming that the surprise kept her quiet. So they all three walked home in silence, though as fast as possible. No lingering by the way to gather flowers, or to watch the ducks in Farmer Girton's pond! Martin held a hand of each little girl, and merely saying now and then, "We must go straight home, my dears," marched steadily on. It was a strange, unnatural kind of walk—the children felt something mysterious about it, without knowing what, and poor Martin's heart was terribly sore. She *could not* scold Hoodie, naughty as she had undoubtedly been, for sad fears were picturing themselves before her—what might not be the result of Hoodie's disobedience?

"Supposing," thought poor Martin, who was of a very anxious, as well as affectionate disposition, "supposing this is the last walk we ever have together? oh dear, oh dear—scarlet fever is an awful thing once it gets into a family, and the kind that is about is a bad kind, they say."

She did not lose her presence of mind, however. As soon as ever they reached the house, she sent the two children straight up to Maudie's room, a plainly

furnished little room opening out of the day-nursery, and told them to wait there till she came to them. Then she went at once to see their mother, and some time passed before she came up to them.

"What's the matter, Martin?" said Maudie, timidly. "Why do you look so sad?"

She did not notice that her mother had followed Martin into the room.

"Martin is rather troubled about something," said her mother, "and you must both try to be very good. And I want to tell you that dear little Hec and Duke are not coming home this evening. They are going to stay a few days at the Rectory."

Maudie gazed up into her mother's face. She saw there were tears in her eyes.

"Mamma!" she exclaimed. Then in a low voice she whispered, "I understand, mamma. I'll try to be good, and I'll pray to God for us not to get the catching illness."

Mrs. Caryll stooped and kissed her.

"I knew you would be good, dear, and try to make Hoodie so too. Poor Hoodie—she does not know what her disobedience may have caused."

The next few days passed slowly and strangely. It was strange and dull to be without the boys, and to Hoodie it was particularly strange that no one scolded her for what she knew she had deserved scolding. They went out for a walk twice a day, by the doctor's orders, who came to see them the morning after the unfortunate visit to the cottage. Every one was very kind, but every one looked

grave, and very soon Hoodie began to find it very dull to have no lessons to do, no Hec and Duke to play and quarrel with, and to have to spend all their time in the two rooms, except of course when they were out with Martin, who never left them for a minute. It was very dull, but worse was to follow. On the morning of the sixth day, Maudie woke with a headache, and a bad pain in her throat, and bravely as she tried to bear it, it was plain to be seen that the poor little girl was suffering very much. Martin would not let her get up, and an hour or two after breakfast, Hoodie, sitting alone and very disconsolate in the day-nursery, heard Dr. Reynolds and her mother coming up-stairs. She jumped up and ran to meet them.

"Mamma," she said, "Martin won't let me play with Maudie, and I've nothing to do. Martin is very cross."

Mrs. Caryll looked gravely at Hoodie.

"Hoodie," she said, "you *must* be obedient."

"And Miss Maudie doesn't want her, ma'am," said Martin, appearing at the door of Maudie's room. "She can't bear the least noise; and any way it's better for Miss Hoodie not to be near her, isn't it, sir?" she asked, turning to the doctor.

He shrugged his shoulders.

"As to infection," he said, "separating them now is a chance the more, that's all one can say. But one must do one's best. And in any case the child is better out of a fevered atmosphere. I would prepare another room for her, I think," he added to Mrs. Caryll, and then they both went into Maudie's room, and Hoodie heard no more.

Hoodie sat by herself, drumming her little fat legs on the side of the table.

"I wonder what they mean," she said to herself. "I wonder what the doctor means about affection. That's loving—at least people always put it at the end of their letters whether they're loving or not. I think people tells lots of stories when they'se big—*lotser* than when they'se little. And it's all that horrid Martin that's stoppened my going into Maudie's room—I don't believe Maudie said she didn't want me."

Just then Martin put her head out at the doorway of the inner room.

"Miss Hoodie," she said, "please ring the bell—there's no bell in here—and when Jane comes up, tell her to send Lucy to speak to me at the other door—the door that opens to the passage."

Hoodie executed the commission with great alacrity—even having a message to give was better than having nothing at all to do, and ringing the bell had always been greatly after Hoodie's own heart.

Somewhat to her surprise, a few minutes after Jane had gone down again in search of Lucy, Lucy herself came into the nursery.

"You were to go to the *other* door. What a time you've been of coming up," said Hoodie, politely.

"I've *been* to the other door, Miss Hoodie, and Martin has told me what she wants me to do," replied Lucy. "Poor Martin, I'm right down sorry for her, and poor little Miss Maudie," said Lucy. "Now, Miss Hoodie, I'm going to take you out into the garden a little, and when we come in I'm going to stay with you in the sewing-room."

Lucy's manner had become more decided, and somehow Hoodie did not make any objection. She let Lucy put on her hat and take her into the garden, quietly enough.

"Is Maudie *very* ill, Lucy?" she asked.

"I hope not," said Lucy, "but it's too soon to say much yet."

"Why are you sorry for Martin?" was Hoodie's next inquiry.

"Oh, because it's such a upset, and her that's that fond of you all," said Lucy. "I'm sure if there's anything I can do, I'll be only too glad. I'm very glad I've had the fever."

"Why are you glad? When did you have it, and was it the affection fever like what Maudie's got?" asked Hoodie.

Lucy did not laugh. She was rather a matter-of-fact girl.

"I had it when I was six, and people don't often, almost never, have it twice," she replied. "That's how I'm to take care of you, Miss Hoodie, otherwise they'd have been afraid of my catching it. Your mamma's a very kind lady that way, and it's dreadfully catching—just see how poor Miss Maudie's got it with that one minute in that cottage the other day."

Hoodie stared at her.

"Did Maudie catch it that day she ran to tell me to come away from the baby's mother's cottage?" she said.

Lucy stared at her in turn.

"Of course," she said. "Didn't you know that, Miss Hoodie? It can't be helped now, you see, and we must hope Miss Maudie will get better. But it'll be a lesson to you to be obedient another time. Let's go and gather some flowers, Miss Hoodie, and make a little nosegay for you to send in to Miss Maudie."

But Hoodie shook her head, and she had a look in her face which made Lucy wish she had not told her what she had, though never doubting but that the child already knew it.

"Maudie wouldn't care for any flowers from *me*. Nobody will ever love me at all now," she said. "It was me that made Maudie ill. Oh, I do wish God had made me ill instead of Maudie, for everybody loves her, and nobody loves me."

"Miss Hoodie," said Lucy, really startled. "You *mustn't* talk so. Everybody would love you just as they do Miss Maudie if you'd try to be a good and obedient little girl."

Hoodie shook her head again.

"You don't know, Lucy," she said. "I have tried and it isn't any good, so I've left off."

Lucy trembled a little as to what this announcement might be followed up by, in the way of special naughtiness. But her fears were misplaced. Hoodie was perfectly good and gentle all day—almost too much so indeed; Lucy would have liked to see a touch of her old self-will and petulance, for she could not help fearing she was to blame for the strange depression of Hoodie's spirits. She was very kind and good to the little girl, and did her utmost to amuse

her, but it was a strange, sad time. The house, lately so cheerful with children's voices and the patter of their restless little feet up and down the passages, was now silent and gloomy, and the servants spoke with hushed voices and went about with anxious looks. Hoodie was not allowed to go near Maudie's room—she only saw her mother and Martin now and then at the end of the passage, or out of the window, for they were both engrossed in nursing Maudie. Every morning Hoodie sent Lucy as soon as she awoke to ask for news of Maudie, and though she said very little, there was a look in her eyes when Lucy brought back the answer—"Not much better yet, Miss Hoodie,"—that went to Lucy's heart.

"I'll never say Miss Hoodie has no feelings again," she said to herself, "never."

After a few days there came a morning when Lucy, who was not very clever at hiding *her* feelings, came back to Hoodie looking graver than usual, and with something very like tears in her eyes.

"Isn't Maudie better *yet*, Lucy?" asked Hoodie with a sad sort of impatience.

"She couldn't be better *yet*, Miss Hoodie," said Lucy, "an illness like that always takes its time."

"But is she *worser* then?" said Hoodie, staring up in Lucy's face.

"I'm afraid she is, rather. Her throat's so sore," said Lucy, turning away.

Hoodie said nothing, but sat down quietly on her little chair, leaning her head on her hands. A few minutes after, Lucy went down to the kitchen with Hoodie's breakfast things—she happened not to shut

the door firmly, as the tray was in her hands, and when she came up-stairs again, she was surprised to hear some one talking in the room.

"Who can it be?" she said to herself, for Mrs. Caryll had given strict orders that in case of any infection about Hoodie herself, none of the other servants were to be with her. Lucy stopped a minute to listen. The voice was Hoodie's own. She was kneeling in a corner of the room, and the words Lucy overheard were these—

"Maudie is worser," Hoodie was saying, "Maudie is worser, and if she keeps getting worser she'll die. And it wasn't Maudie's fault that she got the affection fever. It was Hoodie's fault. Oh, please, dear God, make Maudie better, and Hoodie won't mind if *she* gets the fever, 'cos it was her fault. Hoodie's been so naughty, and poor Maudie's good. And everybody loves Maudie, but nobody *can* love Hoodie. So please, dear God, make Maudie better," and then she ended in her usual fashion—"For Jesus Christ's sake. Amen."

Lucy stood holding her breath at the door. When she saw that Hoodie got up from kneeling and sat quietly down on her chair again, she ventured to enter the room. Hoodie looked at her rather suspiciously.

"Lucy," she said, with a touch of her old imperiousness, "I think you should 'amember to knock at the door."

"Very well, Miss Hoodie," said Lucy meekly, for somehow she could not have helped agreeing with whatever Hoodie chose to say, "I'll not forget again."

Hoodie sat quite quiet, still leaning her head on her

hands, doing nothing and seeming to wish for nothing.

"Are you not well to-day, Miss Hoodie?" Lucy asked at last.

"Yes," said Hoodie, "I'm kite well, and I think Maudie'll be better to-morrow."

But all day long she continued very, very quiet, and once or twice Lucy wondered if she should let Hoodie's mother or Martin know how strange the child seemed.

"I'll wait till to-morrow, any way," she decided. "It seems a shame to trouble them more to-day, for this has been much the worst day with Miss Maudie, I fancy. It's to be hoped it's the turn."

And when to-morrow morning came she was glad she had not troubled them, for Hoodie seemed better and brighter than for some days past. She did not seem impatient for the news of Maudie, not as impatient as Lucy herself, who ran along to tap at Martin's door as soon as she awoke, and came back with a relieved face to tell Hoodie that the news was much better this morning, Maudie seemed really to have got the turn.

"I knew she'd be better to-day," said Hoodie, composedly. "Didn't I tell you so, Lucy?"

And when they went out into the garden she carefully gathered a nosegay for Maudie, choosing the prettiest flowers and tying them together with a piece of ribbon she took off one of her dolls.

"Take those to Maudie's room, Lucy," she said, "and tap at the door, and tell Martin they're for Miss

Maudie with Miss Hoodie's love, and she's very glad she's better."



"Tell Martin they're for Miss Maudie with Miss Hoodie's love."

"Miss Maudie will be pleased, I'm sure," said Lucy, thinking to herself as she said so how very pretty Miss Hoodie was looking. Her eyes were so bright, and her cheeks so rosy, and on her face there was such a pretty smile while she was arranging the flowers, that Lucy could not resist stooping down to kiss her.

"Never was a sweeter child than she can be when she likes," said Lucy to herself, as she made her way with the nosegay and the message to Maudie's room.

Altogether things were beginning to look much brighter again, and, reassured as to Maudie's being really better, Mrs. Caryll went to bed that night for the first time for a fortnight, with a lighter heart.

"Maudie is much better," she had written that evening to Cousin Magdalen, "and it is not now likely that Hoodie will get the fever, as so many days have passed. Somehow I have never felt very uneasy about Hoodie from the first, though 'by rights,' as the children say, she should have had it and not poor Maudie, as it all came through her disobedience. And even if she had got it, I should not have felt so anxious as about Maudie—Hoodie is so very strong. But I hope now that we need not be anxious about either, and that our troubles are passing over."

Poor Mrs. Caryll would not have written so cheerfully had she known that that very afternoon Lucy's fears about Hoodie had again been aroused. The little girl would not eat anything at tea-time, though she drank eagerly two or three cups of milk. And after tea she said her head ached, and she was so sleepy and tired that Lucy thought it well to put her early to bed.

"Such a pity," thought Lucy, "just when she was looking so bright this morning. I wish I could think she had just caught cold, but the weather's so fine, it's not likely."

All night Hoodie tossed about uneasily. She started and talked in her sleep, and by morning she looked so flushed and strange that Lucy felt that she must at once tell Martin, and that there could be no question of Hoodie's getting up and being dressed. She wanted to get up, poor little girl, but her head felt so giddy when she raised it from the pillow that she was glad to lay it down again. And before the day was many hours older, there was no doubt that Hoodie had got the fever.

She knew it herself, though nothing was said about it before her, and she had her own thoughts about it in her mind, which she expressed to Lucy when no one else was there.

"I've got the affection fever, Lucy," she said. "I'm sure I have, 'cos I asked God to make Maudie better 'cos it wasn't her fault, and I said I wouldn't mind if I had it, 'cos it was my fault."

And poor Lucy, not knowing what to say, turned away to hide the tears in her eyes.

"I don't think we need be anxious about her," said Mrs. Caryll to the doctor, "she is so much stronger than Maudie."

But Dr. Reynolds did not reply very heartily; the truth being that he saw from the first that Hoodie was likely to be much more ill than Maudie had been. And Hoodie herself from the first, too, seemed to have a strange, babyish instinct that it was so.

"I'm glad Maudie is better," she said often during the first day or two, to Lucy, "'cos you know it wasn't her fault. I don't mind having the affection fever, but it is rather sore. Everybody loves Maudie so, it's a good thing she's better."

"But everybody loves you too, Miss Hoodie," said Lucy, tenderly, "specially when you're such a good, patient little girl."

Hoodie made a movement as if she would have shaken her head, only the poor little head was too heavy and aching to shake.

"No, Lucy," she said, "not like Maudie, 'cos she's so good, and I'm not. I did try, but I had to leave off. And my bird's dead, you know, though I did ask God to take care of it every time I said my prayers. But I'm glad God's made Maudie better. I 'appose it's 'cos she's good. But I don't mind having the fever—not now my bird's dead, 'cos he did love me, didn't he, Lucy?"

Her mind was beginning to wander, and for many days and nights Hoodie knew nothing of anything that passed about her. Sometimes she seemed in a sort of stupor, at others she would talk incessantly in her little weak childish voice, till it made one's heart ache to hear her. She did not suffer so much from her throat as Maudie had done, though otherwise so much more ill. The fever seemed to have seized her in its strong, cruel arms with so hard a grasp, that often and often it appeared to those about her as if it never again would let her go, but would carry her away out of their sight, without her even being able to bid them good-bye—murmuring ever those sad words which seemed to be burnt into her childish brain, about nobody loving her because she wasn't

good like Maudie, about having tried in vain to be good, and that her birdie was dead and God didn't love her either, always ending up that it was a good thing Maudie was better, "wasn't it, Lucy?" Though when poor Lucy choked down her tears to answer cheerfully "Yes, indeed, Miss Hoodie," poor Hoodie could not hear her voice, and began again the same weary murmurings.

It was very sad for them all—most sad of all for Hoodie's mother, whose heart grew sore as she listened to her poor little girl's faint words. It seemed to her that never before had she understood her child, and the great longing for love that had been hidden in her queer-tempered, fanciful nature.

"Oh, Hoodie darling, we do love you—dearly, dearly," she would sometimes say as she bent over her; but the bright eyes, too bright by far, gazed up without seeing, and the weary little head, shorn of its pretty tangle of fuzzy hair, moved restlessly on the pillow, while Hoodie kept talking about her dead bird and nobody loving her, through the slow weary hours while life and death were fighting over her little bed.

"If she dies without knowing us again, it will break my heart," said Hoodie's mother to the doctor; and what could he say, poor man, but shake his head sorrowfully in sympathy?

They tried to prevent Maudie knowing how ill Hoodie was, but it was impossible. When people are ill, or recovering from illness, they seem to guess things in a way that is sometimes quite astonishing, and so it was with Maudie. She was now much better —she had been half-dressed and lifted on to a sofa in her own room some days ago, but when she found

out about Hoodie, she fretted so dreadfully that it threatened to make her ill again.

"Oh, do let me see her!" she cried. "I don't mind if she's too ill to know me. I don't mind if she can't speak to me, but I must see her. Poor Hoodie, dear little Hoodie," she went on, the tears streaming down her face. "Oh, mamma, I don't think I was always very kind to her. I used to tell her we'd be happier without her, but I *do* love her. Oh, do let me see her!"

For unfortunately, through hearing some of the servants talking, Maudie knew some part of what Hoodie had been saying in her unconsciousness, and it was this that was distressing her so greatly.

Oh, children dear, remember this—there is no pain so terrible, no suffering so without comfort, as the feeling sorrow *too late* for unkindness or want of tenderness to others—little sharp words which did not seem so bad at the time, careless or selfish neglect of the wishes we could have gratified with just a little trouble—how they all rise up *afterwards* and refuse to be forgotten! Our grief may then exaggerate our past unkindness perhaps, and, as is the way with our weak human nature, things out of our reach seem of double value; the affection we knew to be always at hand we never prized enough till we lost it. But should we not take this as a warning? Avoid the *habit* of small unkindnesses, of sharp, hurting words—even though in your heart you do not mean them. Try, my darlings, every hour and every day, to behave to each other as you would wish to have behaved, were this day to be your last together. Then indeed even the sore parting of death would lose half its bitterness—the kingdom of

Heaven would already have begun in your own hearts—the happy kingdom where there is neither sorrow nor bitterness, nor tears—the kingdom over which reigns the beautiful Spirit of Love.

At last there came a day on which the doctor said that without risk Maudie might be taken to see Hoodie—only to see her—there was no thought of her speaking to Hoodie, or Hoodie to her, for the little girl was lying in a stupor—quite quiet and unconscious, and out of this stupor, though he did not say so, Dr. Reynolds had but little hope of her waking to life again. The fever had let her go at last, had thrown her down, as it were, careless of how she fell, and the poor little shaken worn-out Hoodie that it had left there, white and thin and lifeless, hardly seemed as if it *could* ever rouse up again to live and talk and play—and there was nothing to do but to wait.

So Maudie was carried into the room where this unfamiliar Hoodie was lying, and allowed to look at her poor little face and to cry quietly to herself as she looked. In whose arms, children, do you think she was carried? It was in Magdalen's. When she heard of the trouble that had fallen over her little friends she could not rest till she came to them. She had had the fever long ago, she wrote; she was so strong that nursing never made her ill or tired—she could sit up a whole week of nights without being knocked up. But when she arrived she found that in the way of actual nursing there was little to do. Hoodie lay still and lifeless—all the restlessness gone; for her indeed, it seemed to Magdalen, there would never again be anything to do, no care and tenderness to bestow—and the thought brought burning tears to poor Magdalen's eyes, though she bravely drove them

back, and did her best to comfort Maudie and her mother.

"Cousin Magdalen," said Maudie, when they had sat for a few minutes by Hoodie's bed, "Cousin Magdalen, can't we do *anything* to make her better? Oh, dear, dear little Hoodie, oh, how I wish I had never been the least bit not kind to her."

Then raising herself in her cousin's arms, she knelt on her lap, and leaning her head on Magdalen's shoulder, she said, while her voice was broken with sobs—

"Oh, dear God, *please* make Hoodie better. We do so love her—and she doesn't know how we love her, because I've been unkind to her sometimes. Oh, dear God, *please* make her better."

And then, her voice changing a little, as if she were afraid that her simple entreaty was hardly solemn enough to be considered "prayer," she added, like Hoodie, "For Jesus Christ's sake. Amen."

A slight movement just then made itself heard in Hoodie's cot; a flutter more than anything else. Magdalen, gently putting Maudie on her chair, started up in alarm. She knew that any change in Hoodie was now most critical. She bent over the child, the better to observe her. A faint smile came fluttering to Hoodie's face, and in another moment, with a little effort, she opened her eyes. But she did not seem to see, or if she saw, she did not recognize, Magdalen, for the word that she whispered was "Maudie."

Low as it was Maudie heard it.

"She's speaking to me," she exclaimed. "Yes, Hoodie

dear, what is it?"

Magdalen lifted her on to the bed. She could not refuse, though afraid that perhaps she was not doing right. The two little sisters lay close together.

"Maudie," whispered Hoodie again, in a little, weak, faint voice. "Maudie, I was waking, and I heard you speaking so nice. I heard you say 'Please God make Hoodie better, 'cos we *do* so love her.' I didn't know that, Maudie, I've been so naughty. But if you want me to get better I'll try. God's been very kind except that He let birdie die. But I love you better than birdie, Maudie, and perhaps God'll make me better too."

She could not say any more, but she smiled again as Maudie, put her arms round her and covered her face with loving kisses. Then Martin, whom Magdalen had summoned, gave her the wine the doctor had ordered in case of her awaking; Hoodie took it meekly, and then turning her head on the pillow murmured gently, "I'm very sleepy, but I'll soon get better. The affection fever was very sore, Maudie."

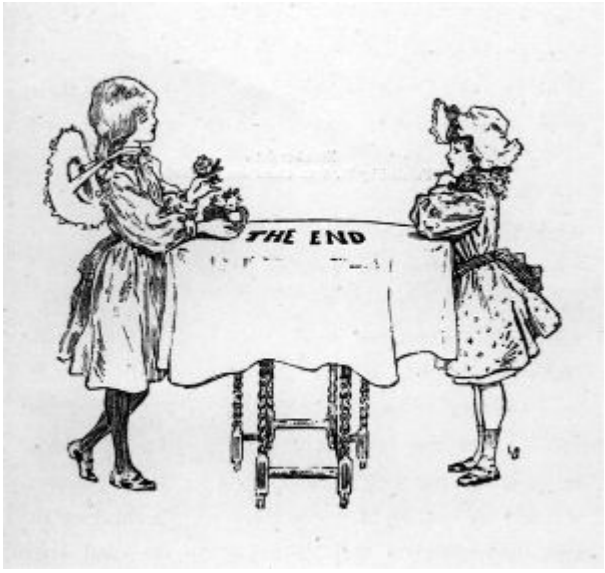
Hoodie was right. From that moment she did begin to get better. They were still very anxious about her —there were many days still to pass before it was quite sure that she was out of danger, and for many more after that she was so weak that it hardly seemed as if a child's usual strength could ever come back to her. But in time all came right, and terribly ill as she had been, the fever left no lasting harm. And the life that began for the two little sisters from this time was a bright and peaceful one—they had learnt to value each other and each other's love as never before, and from the moment that it came home to Hoodie, that she really took into her fanciful

little heart, how dearly she was loved, half her troubles seemed at an end. Day by day she learned new ways in which even she, a little simple child, might help and comfort and cheer those about her—she lost the old sore feeling of being nothing but a trouble and a worry, an "always naughty" Hoodie, and never again was any one tempted to say that among the fairies invited to baby Julian's christening, those of sweet temper and unselfishness had been forgotten.

They are grown-up now—much more than grown-up. If you met them in the street, if they came to call on your mother some day, you would not guess they were quiet little Maudie and queer-tempered Hoodie. And as for Hec and Duke!—they could jump you up on their great strong shoulders as easily as the ogres they used to be so fond of making up stories about. There is only one thing which, if you heard it said, as it often is, might remind you of the children I have been telling you about. Men and women as they are, separated sometimes by half the world, it has always been remarked of them how much they love each other—brothers and sisters in deed, as well as in name, friends tried and true to each other through all the difficulties and sorrows and troubles which have come to them as to every one else in this world of many colours; of rainy as well as of sunny days—of discouragement and disappointment, but of happiness too—and love through all.

Cousin Magdalen's dark hair is beginning to get white now, but still I feel sure you would think her very pretty. Did she ever write out the story that she

promised to tell Hoodie and the others some day? By the bye I must not forget to ask her the next time we meet.



Books by Mrs. Molesworth

PUBLISHED BY

W. & R. CHAMBERS, Limited.

MEG LANGHOLME; or, The Day after To-morrow. Eight Illustrations by W. Rainey

PHILIPPA. Eight Illustrations by J. Finnemore

OLIVIA. Eight Illustrations by Robert Barnes

BLANCHE. Eight Illustrations by Robert Barnes

ROBIN REDBREAST. Six Illustrations by R. Barnes

WHITE TURRETS. Four Illustrations by W. Rainey

IMOGEN; or, Only Eighteen. Four Illustrations by H. A. Bone

THE NEXT-DOOR HOUSE. Six Illustrations by W. Hatherell

THE GREEN CASKET, AND OTHER STORIES. Illustrated

THE BEWITCHED LAMP. Frontispiece by R. Barnes

NESTA; or, Fragments of a Little Life

W. & R. CHAMBERS, LTD., LONDON AND EDINBURGH.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK HOODIE ***

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE

THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG™ LICENSE

PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg License when you share it without

charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

> This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project

Gutenberg™ License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg License terms from this work,

or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”

- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.

- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.

- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project

Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability

to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you ‘AS-IS’, WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR

IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg

Project Gutenberg is synonymous with the free

distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg's goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 41

Watchung Plaza #516, Montclair NJ 07042, USA, +1 (862) 621-9288. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations ($1 to $5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the

solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate.

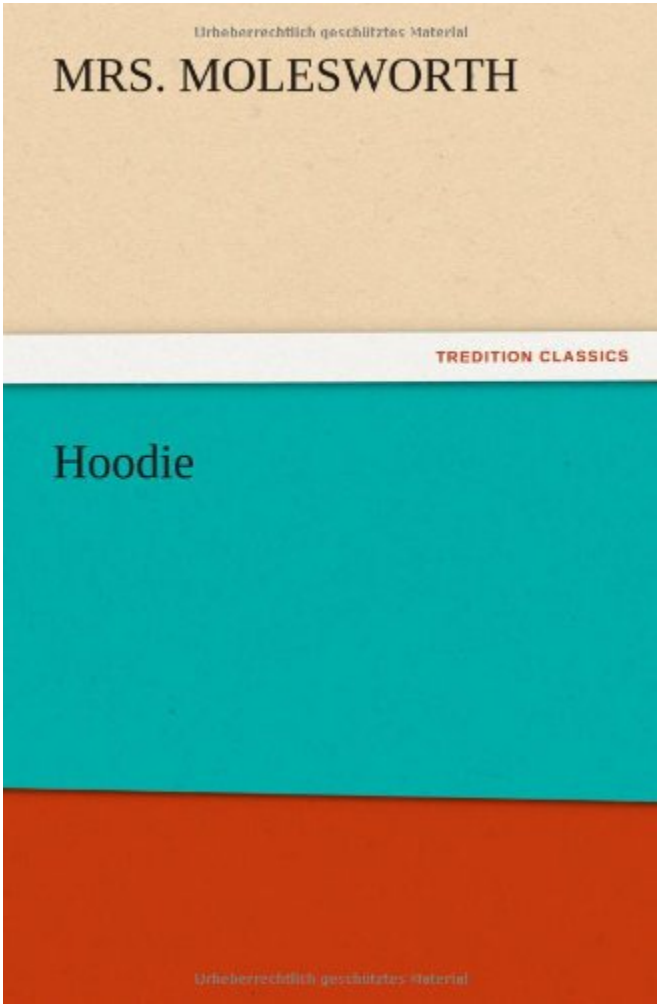
Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.


Urheberrechtlich geschütztes Material
MRS. MOLESWORTH
TREDITION CLASSICS
Hoodie
Urheberrechtlich geschütztes Material

back



back