

has been the very hardest part of all. When I was lying so ill, and they thought I was unconscious, I once heard mamma and one of the doctors—not Dr. Marston—talking, and I heard him say how he feared I should never walk again; and then mamma said—oh, so bitterly!—“That if I was to be a helpless cripple all my life, I had far better have died at once.” Think of that, Katy. Think of one’s own mother feeling one a burden and a weariness. And I know mamma feels me to be so.”

“Oh, hush—hush, Stella! You must be mistaken!” cried Katy, in a shocked and pained voice. “I am sure it cannot be so—I am sure you are wrong. Why, a trouble like yours, you poor darling, is just the very thing to make a mother love and pity you more.”

Katy was thinking of her own mother, and judging Mrs. Branscombe’s affection by that standard; but Stella feebly shook her head.

“You don’t understand,” she said. “My mamma was very fond of me when she could be proud of me. You know she has always been a great beauty, and been very much admired, and she has always looked forward to my being a belle too—and I meant to be, I meant to be the belle of the county. But now there is nothing left for her to be proud of; I never can be a credit to her, only an incumbrance and a nuisance, and she is growing tired of me. She said she would rather I had died,” she went on, in a tone of conviction; “and if she wished it, can you wonder that I should? What do you think it feels like to have all the sunshine suddenly shut out of your life, and to know you can never take any more pleasure in things you used to like better than anything in the world? Used to like!” she repeated bitterly. “I do like them still; I love dancing, and travelling, and pretty dresses, and everything that I never can enjoy again. Oh, it is terribly hard! The vicar’s wife called one day, and talked about dispensations of Providence and bowing beneath the rod, and all that sort of thing. It didn’t do me a bit of good. It all sounded as if she had got it off by heart before she came, and she said it all as if she was repeating a lesson. It’s easy enough for her to talk when she’s well and strong, and has everything she wants, but if she felt as I did she wouldn’t talk so glibly about bowing beneath the rod—and—”

“Oh, hush, dear, you mustn’t talk so!” cried Katy, deeply shocked at Stella’s tone.

“It’s true, all the same,” was the reply.

“I’m not religious, Katy, and I don’t think I ever cared a rap for good things, or perhaps I should feel grateful to Mrs. Lowe, as no doubt I ought to. But she didn’t do me a bit of good, and I don’t want to see her again. You’ve helped me far more, dear, than she did with all her set speeches and nice little phrases. Now we’ll try to talk of something livelier. Won’t you have a peach? And please ring the bell and we’ll have tea, and you shall pour it out for me.”

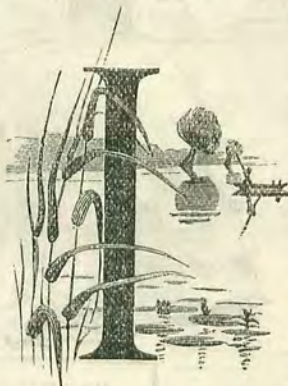
But though Katy did her best to entertain Stella with pleasant gossip and chit-chat, the attempt was a dismal failure. The careless words, “I am not religious,” had grieved Katy’s tender little heart, but she knew not how to answer them. It seemed to her that in Stella’s position religion was the only comfort she could find. How she wished she knew what to say that would be fit and appropriate! She thought of her favourite little poem of the daisy and buttercup, but feared whether Stella would care for the application. Besides, the positions seemed to have changed altogether.

It was the daisy that might envy the buttercup now.

(To be continued.)

ON ANSWERING ADVERTISEMENTS.

A WORD OF WARNING.



IN the pressure of many subjects, we feel that we have not spoken with necessary emphasis on the danger of trusting to advertisements which offer a great return for very small investments.

Among our readers there are

many just entering on life as workers, who are anxious to be put in the way of earning

money for their support, and many more who, inheriting a small patrimony insufficient to supply all their wants, are desirous to add to it with as little disturbance to their domestic comfort as possible. From these classes, as well as from elderly women whose means have been straitened by circumstances, many dishonest advertisers draw their victims, and although only a small outlay need be made, promise an immediate return, and that at the ratio of at least 100 per cent., and if art is to be the source of wealth, it is an art which can be learnt with little expense of time, and the work can be done at home. In one case, where the increase of income is to be obtained without study and without interference with ordinary pursuits, the respondent is informed that the desired accession is easily procurable from the percentage on the sale of cheap jewellery, to be supplied by the advertisers!

Among a host of other absurd and cruel advertisements, one which has lately come under our notice promises to teach china-painting to persons who have no previous knowledge of art in an incredibly short time; but we will quote the words of a letter sent to a lady who answered an advertisement. “By my system of teaching any person of ordinary capacity can learn the art in about a month or five weeks, and a thorough good income can always be made either by giving lessons or by working for some of the many firms who deal in artistic products.” After much more to the same effect, he informs his client that if she follows the “clear, lucid instructions which he sends she can learn the art with facility at home.”

The young lady, we need hardly say, having spent time and money on this *ignis fatuus*, is very far from being in the receipt of a “thorough good income”—in fact, she has nothing but a few spoilt tiles, though she is a person of at least “ordinary capacity,” and most anxious to learn.

This is the third case of which we have become personally cognisant within the last six months, and in one instance a lady of more than middle life and very straitened means was mulcted of over £60.

Surely, then, it is high time that young mariners on the sea of life be warned off these dangerous quicksands, and exhorted to trust to nothing but the true mariner’s compass of steady and persistent work, which alone will certainly guide them into good havens at last.



WHEN THE MISTS HAVE ROLLED AWAY.

WHEN the mists have rolled in splendour
From the beauty of the hills,
And the sunshine, warm and tender,
Falls in kisses on the rills,
We may read love’s shining letter
In the rainbow of the spray;
We shall know each other better
When the mists have rolled away.

If we err, in human blindness,
And forget that we are dust;
If we miss the law of kindness
When we struggle to be just,
Snowy wings of peace shall cover
All the anguish of to-day,
When the weary watch is over,
And the mists have cleared away.

When the silver mist has veiled us
From the faces of our own,
Oft we deem their love has failed us,
And we tread our path alone.
We should see them near and truly,
We should see them day by day;
Never love nor blame unduly
If the mists have cleared away.

When the mists have ris’n above us,
As our Father knows His own,
Face to face with those that love us,
We shall know as we are known.
Lo, beyond the orient meadows
Floats the golden fringe of day;
Heart to heart we’ll bide the shadows
Till the mists have cleared away.