

THE DARNING-NEEDLE.

FROM THE SWEDISH OF ANDERSEN.

THERE was once a darning-needle that thought so much of herself that she fancied she was a sewing-needle.

"Only mind you hold me fast," would she say to the fingers that took hold of her, "and don't let me fall on the floor, or I should never be found again, I am so delicate."

"This will do," said the fingers, taking her up round the body.

"See, I come with a whole retinue!" said the darning-needle, drawing a long thread after her; only there was no knot at the end of the thread.

The fingers directed the needle toward the cook's slipper. The upper-leather had cracked, and it was to be sewed together.

"This is very coarse work," said the darning-needle, "I shall never get through—I shall break—I am breaking."

And sure enough she broke.

"Did I not say so?" said the darning-needle; "I am too delicate for such work!"

"The needle will be of no further use," said the fingers, though they still held it fast; and the cook dropped some wax on the needle, and fastened her neckerchief with it.

"There! now I am a breast-pin!" said the darning-needle. "I knew that I should rise in the world. If one has merit, one is sure to become something or other." And then she laughed in her sleeve—for nobody ever saw a darning-needle laugh—and there she stuck as proud as though she were sitting in a stage-coach, looking all about her.

"By your leave—are you made of gold?" asked she of a neighboring pin. "You have a very fine appearance, and a remarkable head, only it is very small! You must try and grow, for it is not everybody who has wax dropped upon them." And the darning-needle bridled up so proudly that she toppled over out of the neckerchief, and fell into the sink, which the cook was then cleaning out.

"Now I am going to travel," said the darning-needle, "but it is to be hoped I shall not get lost."

But in fact she was lost.

"I am too genteel for this place!" said she, as she lay in the sink. "But I know what I am, and that is some little comfort." And the

darning-needle maintained her proud bearing, and did not lose her good temper.

And all sorts of things swam over her, such as chips of wood, bits of straw, and pieces of old newspapers.

"See how they sail!" said the darning-needle.

"They don't dream of what is sticking below them, though it is I who am sticking—who am sitting here! There goes a chip who thinks of nothing in the world but himself—a mere chip! There runs a straw, and how he turns and twists about! Don't be thinking of your foolish self, or you will run against a stone! There swims a piece of a newspaper. Its contents have been long since forgotten, and yet he is mightily proud. I am sitting still and am patient. I know what I am, and that I shall remain, come what will."

One day something lay close to her that glittered so splendidly that the darning-needle fancied it must be a diamond; but it was merely a bit of glass, only as it shone so brightly, the darning-needle spoke to it, giving herself out as a breast-pin.

"You are a diamond, I presume?"

"Something of the kind."

So each imagined the other to be very valuable, and their conversation turned upon the haughtiness of the world.

"I lived in a damsel's box," said the darning-needle, "and this damsel happened to be a cook; she had five fingers on each hand; but anything more arrogant than those fingers I never saw. And yet they were only there for the express purpose of taking me out of the box, and putting me back into the box."

"Were they, then, of high descent?" inquired the piece of broken bottle.

"High descent? Oh, dear, no!" said the darning-needle, "but haughty to the last degree. They were five brothers, all born fingers. They stood proudly beside each other, although they were of unequal heights; the outside one, namely, the thumb, was short and thick, and his position was beside the limb, and he had only one joint, and could only make a bow, but he said that any human being who had lost him, was not fit for the army. His next neighbor, a thorough sweet-tooth, dipped into sweet and sour, pointed

to the sun and moon, and formed the letters when they all wrote. Master Longman, the middle finger, looked down upon all the others. Gold-collet, the fourth brother, wore a gold circlet round his body, and little Peter Spielmann did nothing at all, which he was very proud of. They were a set of boasters, and such they will remain, and that is why I left them."

"And now we lie here and glitter," said the piece of broken bottle.

Just then more water was poured into the sink, which overflowed, and the broken glass was carried away by the stream.

"So he is off!" said the darning-needle. "I am left lying here, because I am too genteel—but that's my pride, and a laudable one it is."

And she remained proudly stuck where she was, indulging in mighty grand thoughts.

"I could almost fancy that I were born of a sunbeam, I am so delicate! And it seems as if the sunbeams always tried to find me under the water. Alas! I am so delicate that my own mother would not be able to find me. If I still possessed my old eye, which was broken off, I think I should fain weep; but I will not—because it is not genteel to cry."

One day a couple of boys in the street were paddling in the gutter, where they turned up old nails, pennies, and such things. It was dirty work, but they seemed to delight in it.

"La!" cried one of them who was pricked by the darning-needle, "here's a fellow!"

"I'm not a fellow, I'm a young lady," said the darning-needle; but nobody heard her.

The wax had disappeared, and she had grown black, but as blackness makes things appear slimmer, she fancied she was genteeler than ever.

"There comes an egg-shell sailing along," said the boys, who now stuck the darning-needle through the egg-shell.

"White walls and a black dress are very becoming," said the darning-needle, "only I can't see myself! I hope I shan't be sea-sick, for then I am afraid I should break."

But she was not sea-sick, and did not break either.

"It is a good preservative against sea-sickness to have a steel stomach, and to bear in mind that one is something more than a mere human being! My feeling of sea-sickness is now over. The genteeler one is, the more one can endure." So she said to herself again.

"Crash!" said the egg-shell, as a wagon rolled over it.

"Mercy! what a weight!" said the darning-needle, "I shall be sea-sick! I shall break!"

But she did not break, though a heavy wagon went over her; she lay at full length in the road—and there let her lie.

GUARDIAN ANGELS.

BY KATE CAMERON.

Come they in the early morning,
Ere the labors of the day,
And they bring us strength and courage,
For the "trials by our way."
And they raise our soul's deep yearnings
To the Giver of all good:
And they waken noble longings,
Utter'd not, yet understood.

Come they at the sultry noon-tide,
When our hearts are weak and faint,
And the spell of their sweet presence
Chides each murmur and complaint.
And they nerve us for fresh effort,
On the battle-field of life,
That the hosts of sin and error
We may conquer in the strife.

Come they when the evening twilight
Closes round with sacred power,
Bearing pure and holy musings,
Peaceful as that vesper hour.

And they waft our praises upward
To the Lord of light and love,
And they bring us down a blessing
From their radiant home above.

Come they in the lone night-watches,
When soft sleep hath fled our eyes;
And the moonbeams and the starlight
Glimmer in the midnight skies.
And in slumber's bless'd visions
Still they seem to hover near,
With the self-same smile of welcome
That to us in life was dear.

Come they with a gentle warning,
When the tempter's voice is heard;
And with fond and soothing pity
When the founts of grief are stirred.
Oh! they are not *dead* the loved ones
Who have left us here in gloom;
And, to cheer our fainting spirits,
Daily, hourly, do they come!