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Buttercup Gold and Other Stories

by Ellen Robena Field

November, 1999 [Etext #1978]

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BUTTERCUP GOLD AND OTHER STORIES

by Ellen Robena Field

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This book is lovingly dedicated to the dear kindergarten
children, and particularly to my little friend, Alice Caro Wing.

"Children are God's apostles, day by day sent forth preach of
love and hope and peace."--Lowell.

"Come to me, O, ye children!
And whisper in my ear
What the birds and winds are singing
In your sunny atmosphere.

Ye are better than all the ballads
That were ever sung or said;
For ye are living poems
And all the rest are dead."--Longfellow.

"And Nature, the old nurse, took
The child upon her knee,
Saying: 'Here is a story-book
Thy Father has written for thee.'"--Longfellow.

The Little New Year

One cold morning Maurice awoke from his dreams and sat up in bed and listened. He thought he heard a knock at his window; but though the moon was shining brightly, Jack Frost had been so busily at work that Maurice could not see through the thickly painted panes. So he crept sleepily out of bed, and opened the window, and whispered: "Who is there?"

"I am," replied a tinkling voice. "I am the little New Year, ho! ho! And I've promised to bring a blessing to everyone. But I am such a little fellow I need somebody to help me distribute them. Won't you please come out and help?"

"Oh, it's so cold!" said Maurice; "I'd rather go back to my warm bed;" and he shivered as Jack Frost, who was passing, tickled him under the chin with one of the frosty paint brushes.

"Never mind the cold," urged the New Year; "please help me."

So Maurice hurried into his clothes, and was soon out in the yard. There he found a rosy-cheeked boy a little smaller than himself, pulling a large cart which seemed to be loaded with good things. On one side of this cart was painted the word "Love," and on the other "Kindness." As soon as the New Year saw Maurice he said, "Now please take hold and help me pull;" and down the driveway and up the hill they travelled until they came to an old shanty.

"Here is where I make my first call," said the New Year. Maurice looked wonderingly at him. "Why, nobody lives here but an old colored man who works for us; and he hasn't any children!" "He needs my help," said the New Year; "for grown people like to be thought of just as much as children do. You shovel out a path to his door, while I unload some of my blessings; and the little hands went busily at work, piling up warm clothing, wood, and a new year's dinner, the New Year singing as he worked:-

"Oh, I am the little New Year; ho! ho!
Here I come tripping it over the snow,
Shaking my bells with a merry din;
So open your door and let me in."

Old Joe, hearing some noise outside, came to the door, and when he saw all the nice gifts the tears ran down his cheeks for

gladness; and as he carried them into the house, he whispered:
"The dear Lord has been here to-night."

"Where am we going now?" asked Maurice, as they ran down the hill. "To take some flowers to a poor sick girl," answered the New Year.

Soon they came to a small white house, where the New Year stopped. "Why, Bessie, our sewing girl lives, here," said Maurice. "I didn't know she was sick." "See," said the New Year, "this window is open a little; let us throw this bunch of pinks into the room. They will please her when she wakes, and will make her happy for several days."

Then they hurried to other places, leaving some blessing behind them.

"What a wonderful cart you have," said Maurice; "though you have taken so much out, it never seems to get empty." "You are right, Maurice, there is never any end to love and kindness. As long as I find people to love and be kind to, my cart is full of blessings for them; and it will never grow empty until I can no longer find people to help. If you will go with me every day and help me scatter my blessings, you will see how happy you will be all the long year."

"A happy New Year!" called some one; and Maurice found himself in bed, and his sister standing in the doorway smiling at him. "Have you had a pleasant dream, dear?" she asked.

"Why, where is the little New Year?" said Maurice; "he was just here with me."

"Come into Mamma's room and see what he has brought you," answered his sister. There in a snowy white cradle he found a tiny baby brother, the gift of the New Year. How happy Maurice was then! But he did not forget his dream. Old Joe and Bessie had their gifts, too, and Maurice tried so hard to be helpful that he made all his friends glad because the happy New Year had come.

Mother Nature's House Cleaning

One morning Mother Nature stood at the door of her house looking out over the world. King Winter's reign was over and he had gone back to his home at the North Pole; and Spring was coming over the hill with her three little helpers to make Mother Nature a visit.

Let us see who these helpers were. First there was roguish March with his rosy cheeks, and his curly hair flying in the winds that blew all about him. Next came Baby April with her apron full of

violets, daffodillies, and green grasses. Part of the time she smiled sweetly, and part of it she frowned till the big tear drops chased each other down her cheeks. Last came May, playing tag with the sunbeams, wandering knee-deep in flowers, and calling to the birds that sang around her:

Mother Nature watched them coming and murmured, "Such a dirty world as King Winter has left behind him! It must be cleaned up before the little girls, April and May, come, but March I am sure will want to help me do it."

She beckoned to the frolicsome boy who came racing down the hill to see what she wanted. "I must have some rain to wash away all this dirty snow," she said; so March whistled to the East Wind, who blew together the rain-clouds, and soon the tiny rain drops were busy at work washing the floors of the world, and in a short time the snow was all gone. Then Mother Nature wanted the sky ceilings cleaned, so this time March whistled to the West Wind who began to sweep away the cloud cobwebs from the sky till the cheery old sun smiled again, and shone Mother Nature a bright "good morning."

"Now March," said she, "there is one more thing you can do to help. You must start the work for Baby April." Then March, with the South Wind to help him, awoke the seeds, whispered to the trees to begin to bud, started the brooks singing, and called the robins back from the South.

When his visit was over Mother Nature thanked him for helping her so well on all of the thirty-one days he had spent with her, and told him she would send for him again when her next cleaning day came around.

How the Raindrops and Sunbeams Helped

One morning Mother Nature looked about her, and said: "My children have had such a nice long rest and it will do them good, for they have a busy summer before them. It is time to go to work now, and as some of the babies just won't wake up till they have to, I must send for my helpers at once." The long days carried her messages, which in our language would have read something like this:-

My Dear Helpers, Sunbeams, and Raindrops:--

You are needed down here on earth. It is time to dress my plant children, and give them work to do. The birds must be called back from the South, and the cocoons must be opened so that my butterflies can come out. I shall have to make good soil and get my clover beds ready for the honey makers. Come at once, as some have been sleeping too long already. Whisper to the trees as you

pass that it is time they were budding, Be gentle with all, for they are my children, and I love them.

Good-bye, from your
Mother Nature

This she directed to the Sunbeams at Blue Sky Park, and the Raindrops at Cloud Land. When the message reached these little helpers, they started off at once to obey the call, and the sun gave such a merry laugh, that Grandma came to the door of the farm house and remarked: "How warm it is today, quite like spring; I believe I will set out my geraniums." But just then a silvery voice said: "Wait a little while longer till we make the ground soft," and pop came a raindrop upon the dear old lady's nose, and she hurried into the house, saying "What queer weather we are having! first sun and then rain." Then the Raindrops and Sunbeams smiled at each other, and danced more merrily, for they knew what good work they were doing to the great brown house where the flowers dwell.

The tap, tap, of the Raindrops wake them up, and when they raised their sleepy heads and felt the warm kisses of the Sunbeams, they were glad and began to grow. Soft breezes called to the leaves to come out, and soon the brown coats which the trees had worn all winter were replaced by new green dresses. Pussy willow and snowdrop were the first to herald the spring, and crocus and violet soon followed. Out in the woods blossomed tiny pink and white May flowers. Little seeds burst off their jackets and sent up green plumes. Then Mother Nature called her helpers again and told them to search for the lilies, and dress them in white robes for Easter. And so each beautiful flower came again--and the birds sang once more, and the children were glad that spring had come again. The little helpers had done their work well, and were happy--and every one thanked God for the spring.

Rock-A-By Baby

"Rock-a-by baby in the tree top,
When the wind blows the cradle will rock."

Helena was playing with her dolls under the Maple tree in the garden. It was the first warm day of spring, and the little girl was glad to be out of doors again, and to rock her babies to sleep on one of the low branches.

But she was not the only one singing a lullaby that bright sunny morning, for Mother Nature was singing one, too, and a soft breeze was gently tucking some little brown cradles to and fro in the tree tops. Some were very, very small, and others were larger, but each held a wee leaf baby, fast asleep. The next time Helena came out to play, the babies in the treetop were waking up, and

she could see them in their dainty green nightdresses, peeping out at the world. During the next week they grew a great deal, and one of them crept out of their cradles which fell down to the ground, leaving the babies still up in the tree top.

By the time Spring went away, the babies had grown large and strong, and spread beautiful green parasols to give shade to their friends through the hot, dusty days of summer. When Autumn came, Mother Nature gave them a holiday, and how pretty they looked in their gay gowns as they frolicked with the wind!

Then they said good-by to the Maple tree, and went dancing and whirling over the fields to meet King Winter. When Helena looked into their old homes on the tree, she found some more tiny brown cradles, and knew that in them were new leaf babies that sleep safely til Spring comes again to visit Earthdom, and wakes each "baby in the tree top."

A Child of Spring

I know a little maiden,
She is very fair and sweet,
As she trips among the grasses
That kiss her dainty feet;
Her arms are full of flowers,
The snow-drops, pure and white,
Timid blue-eyed violets,
And daffodillies bright.

She loves dear Mother Nature,
And wanders by her side;
She beckons to the birdlings
That flock from far and wide.
She wakes the baby brooklets,
Soft breezes hear her call;
She tells the little children
The sweetest tales of all.

Her brow is sometimes clouded,
And she sighs with gentle grace,
Till the sunbeams, daring lovers,
Kiss the teardrops from her face.
Well we know this dainty maiden,
For April is her name;
And we welcome her with gladness,
As the springtime comes again.

Mr. Frog's Story

Down in the garden is a pretty brook, and something funny happened one day as I was sitting watching the tadpoles and minnows playing tag and hide-and-goseek. All at once something gave a jump out of the water and with a loud "kerchunk," landed on a stone near by. It was Mr. Frog, and as "kerchunk" in frog language means "how do you do?" I replied politely and inquired for his health.

He assured me that he was well and happy, and went on talking. "Did you know that I was once a tadpole just like those little creatures in the brook?"

"I have heard people say that you were," I answered. "You would not believe it to look at me now, would you?"

"No," I said, for certainly he did not look at all like the queer little animals I was watching.

"Yes," he continued, "once I was a tiny black egg in a globe of clear white jelly, and floated around along the bank of this same brook. Soon I grew into a wee tadpole, and freed myself from the globe of jelly, and found I could swim about. I had a long flat tail which I used as a paddle to help me swim. I had no feet nor legs then, but I grew very fast, and soon two legs came out near my tail, and by and by two front ones came, and I did not need my tail any more, so it disappeared. Then I discovered that I had a long, slender tongue to catch insects with. My skin, too, had changed, and is now covered with beautiful spots, and if you look at my eyes you will see how bright they are.

"I live beside this brook with my family, and my cousins, the toads; and in the spring and summer evenings we sing to our little tadpole children, and tell them of the time when they, too, will grow up and be toads and frogs."

Here Mr. Frog paused, and before I could thank him for his interesting story, he gave a loud "kadunk," which means "good-by," and with a splash he was off for a swim in the brook.

The Robin

One day, while walking home from the Kindergarten, I met some travellers coming from the South. They did not come on the car or the boat, but they travelled very quickly. As they passed me I fancied I heard them say, "How do you do? We are glad to see you again. Are there plenty of houses to rent this Spring? You will have a great many more visitors by and by, for our friends are coming North as soon as the weather gets a little warmer."

"Yes," I replied, "some of the houses you occupied last spring are waiting for you, and you will find pleasant places on which

to build new ones in Crab Apple Lane, Woodbine Walk, Maple Park, and Apple Tree Avenue."

"Thank you," they called, and hurried on, leaving me to wonder what sort of a journey they had. All day long I saw them flying to and fro, carrying loads of straw and mud.

Just at twilight there came a rap at my window, and there stood Mr. Robin Redbreast, looking in as saucily as you please. "I thought you'd be there," he chirped; "and if you will look out a minute, I'll show you my house."

Sure enough, there was a tiny home on Apple tree Avenue, just at the corner of Branch Alley. There was a cellar of mud, and the rest of the cottage was neatly woven of straw. "How do you like it?" he chirped.

Of course I admired it, and asked him if he was all ready to go to housekeeping. "All but the beds," he replied, "but if you will give me some hair and a few feathers, I will soon have a soft place for our eggs to rest on."

I threw some out, and in a short time the nest was lined. Then Robin flew off, returning the next day with his mate, who showed her delight at the new home by cozily settling down in it.

Every morning the birds gave a concert above my window, and one day I heard some new notes, and, peeping out, saw that five little robins had come to brighten the cozy nest. Such a busy time as the papa and mamma Redbreasts had now! Such a digging for worms to drop into the big mouths which seemed to be always asking for food! In a few weeks the baby birds learned to fly, and left the nest to make new homes and sing their own sweet songs.

The old birds stayed on the Avenue awhile longer, but when the leaves put on their holiday dresses, and the flowers tied on their nightcaps and went to sleep, the Redbreasts sang good-by to their friends and, spreading their wings, flew away over the house tops toward the Sunny South.

Easter Carol

The world is filled with gladness;
The bells of Easter ring;
Each pure white lily's waking,
To welcome infant spring.

Chorus.

Oh, dear little children, listen,
And hear what the glad bells say!

The sweetest chime they ever rang--
"Our Lord is risen to-day!"

II.

Birds are flying across the sky;
Their songs ring through the air;
They carol of the Father's love
He shows us everywhere.

Chorus.

Oh, dear little children, listen,
And hear what the birdlings say!
The sweetest song they ever sang--
"Our Lord is risen to-day!"

The Lily Sisters

Once upon a time there were three little sisters dressed in green, who lived together in a beautiful palace which was owned by a Great King. Such a beautiful palace as it was! The ceilings were made of turquoise and opal, and soft, velvety green carpets covered the floors.

Many other children lived with these little sisters, and they had such a kind nurse called Dame Nature, who taught them how to do their work well; for everybody had some work to do for the Great King.

Surely no one could be unhappy in such a wonderful home, and yet, I, am sorry to say, one of the little sisters was always discontented.

She knew, for Dame Nature had told her, that some day the Great King would come to see who had done loving work for him, and would give the good lilies beautiful white robes and golden crowns, but she was not willing to wait until the King was ready and saw fit to do it.

When the Sunbeam children came to play, she would hang down her head and sulk, and after a while they would leave her alone, and play with her sisters.

When Professor Rain's school was out, and the jolly little raindrops coaxed her to play with them, she would say crossly, "You are too rough, let me alone!" and they would go and play with the happy little sisters as the sunbeams had done; for everybody loved the two good little lily sisters, who were sorry to see how naughty the other lily was.

But they tried to do their best to help her, and kept on growing.

One day the Great King, who had seen how well they tried to do, thought they deserved their robes and crowns, so he sent the sunbeams dancing away to awaken the inhabitants of the palace for the crowning.

Away they went, peeping through the curtains, and flying into the windows of the palace and waking all the little children with kisses.

Then they took off the old green dresses of the sisters, and put pure white robes on them and gave them crowns of pure gold. The other little sister wished then that she had tried to do right, and drooped until she faded away.

Madam Wind and the Bird family gave a grand concert in Maple Tree Park. Everything was full of gladness, and the lily sisters held a reception all day, and many people came to congratulate them upon being crowned. Among their visitors was wee Ruth, who kissed them and took them to a little sick friend. He smiled as she pressed them into his hand, saying: "Take them, please, for Easter," and in her sweet child language she told the story of Easter, and of the wonderful work the Great King's Son did for the people of the beautiful palace.

Nature's Violet Children

Once on a sunny hill in the woods grew a little colony of violets. They had slept quietly through the long winter, tucked up snug and warm in the soft, white snowblankets that King Winter had sent Mother Nature for her flower babies. Jack Frost had gone pouting over the hills because the little sunbeams would not play with him, and spoiled his fancy pictures. The tiny raindrops knocked at the door of Mother Nature's great, brown house; and the birds called to the flowers to wake up.

So the violets raised their strong, hardy leaves, lifted up their dainty heads, and were glad because spring had come. While they were so happy, a little girl came to the woods in search of wild flowers. "How pretty those violets are," she said. "I wish I could stay and watch the buds open, but I will take some of them with me and keep them in water, and they will remind me of this sunny hill, and perhaps they will blossom."

Then the violets were frightened and whispered, "Please don't take us!" But Ruth did not hear them, and she pulled stem after stem till her small hands were quite filled. Then she said good-by to the pretty place, and the little violets said good-by, too.

When Ruth got home, she put the buds into a vase of water, and set them in an open window where they could see the blue sky and feel the kisses of the sunbeams. But the poor little violets drooped for a time, they were so homesick, and whispered to each other, "Let us give up and die!" A beautiful canary in a cage over their heads sang "cheer up! chirrup,!" but they would not listen to him at first.

By and by they said, "Why do you sing that to us? How can we be happy away from our beautiful home?"

Still the bird sang "cheer up! chirrup! The sun is smiling at you and I am singing to you. We are trying to make you glad. How nice it would be if you would only blossom and make some one happy instead of hanging your heads and trying to die. Do you think I like to be shut up here? If some one would leave the door of my cage open, I would spread my wings and fly out of the window, far away to the green woods and the blue sky. But while I am here, I may as well sing and be glad. Cheer up! chirrup!"

"Perhaps he is right," said the buds, and they lifted up their heads and began to grow. One bright spring morning Mother Nature passed by the window and gave them each a lovely violet cap. Then they were, glad, and Ruth was happy, too, because her buds had blossomed.

The cheery canary sang his sweetest carol to them, and the whole day was bright because Mother Nature's little violet children had tried their best to be happy and so had made others happy, too.

As the great red sun went down into the west, he heard the happy bird still singing "cheer up! chirrup!"

Baby Caterpillar

Baby Caterpillar was tired. All summer long she had been travelling slowly through the green world where she lived, and feeding on the green leaves that grew near her home., Now Autumn had come and Mother Nature had given a holiday to the leaves, who put on their new dresses of red and gold and played tag with the breezes. Baby Caterpillar wanted to play, too, but could not run so fast as the happy little leaves, and she grew very tired and thought she would take a nap. So she found a cozy place among the branches of a grape vine, and made herself a soft, silky blanket. Then she rolled herself away within it, and then, in her queer little cradle, went to sleep.

One night, late in the fall, Jack Frost came over the hill. He spied the cradle swinging to and fro, and began to play roughly with it, for he is a roguish little fellow, and touches everything that comes in his way. But the warm blanket hid the

little sleeper so that Jack could not find her.

By and by King Winter came, bringing beautiful snow blankets to Mother Nature's flower babies. He gently rocked the cradle as he passed, and whispered, "Sleep, baby, sleep! You have no need of my blankets."

At last Spring came with the sunbeams, the best and merriest of Mother Nature's helpers. They awoke the flowers from their long winter nap, and called to the birds and the brooks to begin their songs. When they came to the little brown cradle, they stopped to rest, and Baby Caterpillar began to get very warm under the thick blanket. She woke up and stretched herself, and her cradle broke, and she came out to greet the Spring. But what a change! Instead of the old dingy dress that she went to sleep in, she now had a beautiful yellow one; and, instead of crawling among the leaves, she flew up and away into the sweet spring air to play with the sunbeams and flowers; and the little children called her a butterfly.

Five Little Indian Brothers

Once there were five little brothers living in Farmer Lane's barn. There were a great many other children there, too, but these little brothers played by themselves, and chased each other across the wide floor of the barn until they reached a corner where there was a large crack, and then they could look out into the world. The first thing they saw was Farmer Lane breaking up the rich brown earth with his plough, for Spring had come, and told him it was time to do his planting, while the little brothers were watching him, and wishing they could find a way to roll out into the bright sunshine and help him, something happened. What do you suppose it was?

A great brown hand came up behind them and in a moment they found themselves in a wooden measure with many more of their friends. "What is the matter?" said one little brother. "I don't know," said another. "Maybe we are going to travel," said a third; while the two smallest cuddled very closely together, and whispered, "We won't be afraid; God will take care of us."

The measure was taken, out into the field, where Farmer Lane was still at work, and soon, into the furrows made by the plow, the little brothers were dropped one by one. They lay very still at first. It was so strange and dark in their new home. By and by they found a friend, an earth-worm, who told them wonderful stories, how God would take care of them, and some day would give them a new life. Then the little brothers were glad and hoped it would be soon. Thus the days went by. The warm spring showers moistened the earth, and the sun shone so brightly that the brothers danced for joy way down in their dark home. What do you

suppose happened when they danced? Why, their old coats split open, and some little hands came out. They were helpful hands, too, and went to work at once. Some of them went down into the earth to find food and water for the whole plants, and the others reached upward to the air and sunshine, and spread out beautiful, long green leaves.

Each day the plants grew taller and taller, and new buds came that blossomed into flowery tassels that waved over the tops of the plants. These tassels were full of a golden dust called pollen, and as the wind blew it to and fro, some of the tiny grains found little green cradles along the sides of the plants, and crept into them. There they stayed, growing strong and round, until one midsummer day the plants were full of ripe, sweet ears of corn.

When were the five little brothers, do you ask? Why, they were five little kernels of Indian corn that Farmer Lane planted one spring morning, and each beautiful stalk of corn was the new life the earth-worm told them about. God had taken care of them, and takes care of His little children, too.

Buttercup Gold

Did you ever hear of the pot of gold hidden at the end of the rainbow? Some people think it is there now, but they are mistaken, for a long time ago somebody found it. How he happened to find it, nobody knows, for a great many people have searched in vain, and have never even been able to discover that the rainbow has any ends at all. The man who found it was very selfish and did not want anybody to know, for fear they might want some of his money. So one night he put it in a bag, which he slung over his shoulder, and walked across the fields toward a thick wood where he meant to hide it.

In the bag was something beside the gold--something so small that the greedy man in his hurry had not noticed it. It was a hole, and, as he walked on, one by one the gold coins fell out into the grass. When he reached the wood and found all of his money gone, he hurried back to search for it, but something strange had happened. It was a midsummer night, and the fairies were having a dance out in the meadows. They were good, loving little people, and despised selfishness above everything. One little fairy spied the glittering gold among the grasses. She had seen the greedy man passing by, and knew he would soon be back to hunt for his treasure. "It will do him no good," she said, "if he hides it away, and neither will it help anybody else. I will change it into something that will give joy to rich and poor."

When the greedy man reached the meadow he could see no gold money, but in its place were bright, yellow flowers--buttercup

gold for the children.

The Raindrops

Up above us, near the Sky Country, in a place called Cloudland, live a great many little people, called raindrops. They are very helpful, and always try to do their best, because they know the great King of Cloudland has work for them all. One morning two tiny raindrops were sitting together looking down at Earthdom. "How dusty and hot everything looks," said one drop. "Yes," replied the other, "let us go down and see how much good we can do in Earthdom to-day." So these two little raindrops called their brothers and sisters and told of their plan, and asked them to go, too, for they always wanted to share their good time with others. "Let's have a game of tag, and see who will reach the top of that hill first," said one little drop, and away they scampered. They ran so fast that they reached Earthdom at about the same time, and how glad Mother Nature was to see them. Some of them went at once to visit the flowers, and whispered such sweet words to the tired, dusty blossoms, that they raised their heads again, and thanked the raindrops for the comfort they had brought. Some of them slid down the slanting roofs of houses and filled the wells. Our two little raindrops with five others, went down into the brown earth and cheered up the roots. Then they travelled on, and by and by they came out again further down the hill, and made a beautiful spring, around which little children played. The spring soon helped make a brook, that flowed down over the hillsides, winding in and out among the rocks, washing them smooth and round, singing as it rippled on its way.

By and by it met some more brooks and they made a stream. The sunbeams loved the clear stream and danced to and fro over its surface, as it rushed joyously onward, turning the busy mill wheels, and keeping the grass and flowers alive and beautiful. Sometimes weary travellers walked along its banks, and stooped and quenched their thirst with its pure, cool water. While the stream journeyed on, it met other streams and they made a rivulet, and by and by the rivulet heard a low voice calling, "Come with me and I will show you the mightiest of waters." So the rivulet joined the river, and together they travelled on till they heard the deep voice of the ocean welcoming them to its cave.

Where were the little raindrops that left Cloudland early in the morning? They were playing among the ocean waves, and helping to rock the ships that sailed over the waters. At sunset a vapor-boat carried the drops back home and in the eastern sky they stood with robes of red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet, and made a bright bow of promise.

As they looked down upon Earthdom once more, everything was

fresh, and sweet, and glad, because the little raindrops had done so much to help others, and had left no part of their work undone. The night shadows came, and the rainbow faded slowly away, leaving a message for the children of Earthdom. "Do your best, little children, and big children, too, for God has work for all."

Glories

Laura was tired of playing with her dolls, and tired of taking care of Baby Donald, too, he was such a big baby, and she was a little girl for nine years old. So as soon as nap time came, and baby was at last quiet, Laura went out on the porch and cuddled down in the hammock, where she swung to and fro, wishing there was something nice to do, or some new kinds of dolls to play with. All at once she thought she heard a faint voice say, "What a queer child! Here she is wishing for some new plaything, and has never noticed us. She must be blind, poor child! for every morning we put on our prettiest dresses and smile at her; but she always passes us by."

"Yes," replied another voice, "when she came out here to lie down in the hammock, I brushed her hair softly and left a kiss on her forehead; but she shook me off as if I were a bee trying to sting her."

Laura sat up, rubbed her eyes, and looked around in surprise. Had some one really spoken, or had she only fallen asleep and dreamed it all?

She could see nothing except the morning glories which covered the side of the porch. There seemed to be hundreds of them, blue, white, pink, and violet; and how wide awake they looked! "It must have been the 'glories' talking," said Laura, "but I didn't know glories could talk. Can you, dear glories?"

The flowers nodded, as if they understood what she said.

"What pretty colors! I never half noticed them before," went on Laura, "and wouldn't that blue one make a lovely dress?"

Just then wee Donald, fresh from his nap, came toddling out through the open door, and stretched his little fat hands to the glories. "Baby wants a trumpet," he cried.

Laura laughed aloud as she said: "Why, they do look like trumpets, and like parasols, too;" and she gathered a handful of the blossoms and sprinkled the porch with their brightness. "Let's play with them, baby; see if we can make some dolls;" and Laura stood a glory on the step, and into the tiny hole stuck the yellow center of a daisy, whose petals she had pulled out. On

this center she marked eyes, nose, and mouth; and when a small glory was added for a bonnet, what a pretty flower doll she had, with a pink skirt, green waist, and white bonnet! Then a whole family of glories were made, and Laura gave them each a parasol to carry.

Baby used his glories for tents, and they had a good time playing, and Laura wished she had noticed the glories more before.

By and by, when the day was over, and Laura sat again in the hammock, watching the sleeping glories, she said: "I wonder if the glories could have been talking this morning; "and one little sleepy bud looked as if it could tell if it chose. But Mamma put her arm about the little girl and said, "I think it was a dream, dear. But if the flowers could speak I think they would tell my darling that by using her eyes more, she will find out how much there is that is beautiful, and God made them all for us to enjoy, because he loves us. Every flower that blooms its sweetest, and every child who tries to be good, is a precious part of our Heavenly Father's glories."

A Fall Song

Golden and red trees
Nod to the soft breeze,
As it whispers, "Winter is near;"
And the brown nuts fall
At the wind's loud call,
For this is the Fall of the year.

Good-by, sweet flowers!
Through bright Summer hours
You have filled our hearts with cheer
We shall miss you so,
And yet you must go,
For this is the Fall of the year.

Now the days grow cold,
As the year grows old,
And the meadows are brown and sere;
Brave robin redbreast
Has gone from his nest,
For this is the Fall of the year.

I do softly pray
At the close of day,
That the little children, so dear,
May as purely grow
As the fleecy snow
That follows the Fall of the year.

The Babies' Blankets

"Such a cold day," sighed Mother Nature, "and no blankets to keep my babies warm! Little Jack Frost came over the hill last night, and what mischief the boy is planning to do now, it is hard to tell. He is such a happy little fellow, but is always up to some prank. If Father Winter does not send me some blankets soon, I fear Jack will pinch my babies' toes, and pull their ears, and make them shiver till they are ready to freeze. I have put them to bed and told them to keep quiet, and perhaps Jack will not see them."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed a tinkling voice right at the dear old lady's elbow. "Some of your children did not mind you. Early this morning I found one of them whispering to a sunbeam, and under the hedge found a tiny blue aster. I shook her till she was so cold she was glad to go back to bed again. Ha! ha! ha!" and Jack gave Mother Nature such a hug that she shivered, and murmured: "Poor babies! I must write a letter to Father Winter."

This is what the letter said:

Earthdom, November 1, 1893.

Dear Father Winter:--Have you any warm blankets for my babies? The season is coming when they should take a long, long nap, and Jack is up to his tricks again. Please send me some blankets soon.

From your old friend,

Mother Nature.

This letter she directed to

King Winter,
The Polar Regions,
Cloud-dom.

Then she called her messenger, Autumn Wind, and sent him northward with her message. King Winter was seated on his throne at the back of the North Wind, planning his coming work in Earthdom, when Autumn Wind arrived with the letter.

"Deary me! deary me!" said the king, "has Jack Frost gone to bother Mother Nature? I meant he should wait for me this year. But something must be done. Ho! Snowflake, come here, and bring your sisters and brothers with you."

In a few moments a troop of dainty beings clothed in white came

dancing along. "What do you wish, Father Winter?" they asked.

"Mother Nature has need of you, my helpers," replied the king.
"You must, stop the next passing cloud, and go down to Earthdom,
and cover up the babies. Jack is there, and they are freezing."

Just then a golden-edged cloud floated by, and the snowflakes
huddled together on it and were soon travelling earthward. The
sun was setting as they passed the western gate of the city, and
the cloud was tinged with red and gold. By and by it began to
grow dark, and the little cloud grew larger and larger, and
before long the night came. In the morning the little children of
Earthdom were surprised to see a white covering over the land.

"See the snow, the beautiful. snow" they cried; and the sleds
were brought out, and such a merry time as they had playing in
the white drifts! But I wonder if any of them knew what the snow
really came for, and how glad dear Mother Nature was because her
babies were sleeping safe and warm under the downy snowflake
blankets.

The First Christmas

Once there lay a little baby
Sleeping in the fragrant hay,
And this lovely infant stranger
Brought our first glad Christmas day.

Shepherds on the hillside, watching
Over wandering flocks at night,
Heard a strange, sweet strain of music,
Saw a clear and heavenly light.

Listened to the angels' story:--
How, in David's town so still,
Slept the infant King of Glory,
Dreaming of sweet peace, good will.

And a star of radiant splendor
Led them where the baby lay,
Lowly cradled in a manger,
On that far-off Christmas day.

Though that day was long ago,
Every child throughout the earth
Loves to hear each year the story
Of the gentle Christ Child's birth.

And they seem to see the beauty
Of the eastern star again;
And repeat the angels' chorus:

"Peace on earth, good will to men."

The Christmas Star

Long, long ago, in the blue sky above the hills of Bethlehem, twinkled the stars. Very early in the morning they would sing together and would tell each other of what they had seen during the long night.

They used to watch the shepherds guarding their flocks upon the hillsides, and one bright evening star that looked down upon the earth earlier than the others, would tell stories of little children whispering their prayers at the twilight hour. One wintry night a new star came to visit the other stars. It was so radiant that its rays shone upon the gray hills and made them light as day. It had come on a wonderful errand. The shepherds saw it and were frightened at its strange brightness; but an angel came to them and said: "Do not be afraid; the star has come to bring you good, tidings of great joy, and to show you the place where a little babe is born,--a little babe whose name is Jesus, and who will give peace and joy to the whole world."

Then the shepherds heard some singing,--beautiful singing, for a great many angels had come to tell the good news; and the star grew larger and brighter, it was so glad. When the angels had gone back to Heaven, the shepherds said, "Let us go and see this child." So they left their flocks sleeping on the hillsides, and took their crooks in their hands and followed the star, which travelled on and on till it led them to the little stable in Bethlehem, when the Baby Jesus was cradled in a manger. Then the star moved on again to a country far away, where some good, wise men lived. They saw the bright light, and noticed the star moving on and on, as if it were showing them the way to go. So they, too, followed the star till it rested above the birthplace of Jesus. Then the wise men went in and gave their best gifts to the baby, and they and the shepherds knelt and thanked God for sending the little Christ Child to be the best Christmas present the great world ever had. The star watched over them, casting a peaceful light over all. At last the dawn came over the hill tops, and the star went away, far back into the blue heavens, to tell the other stars the story of our first glad Christmas day.

Love's Garden

There is a quiet garden,
From the rude world set apart,
Where seeds for Christ are growing;
This is the loving heart.

The tiny roots are loving thoughts;
Sweet words, the fragrant flowers
Which blossom into loving deeds,--
Ripe fruits for harvest hours.

Thus in our hearts the seeds of love
Am growing year by year;
And we show our love for the Saviour,
By loving His children here.

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