

Wednesday, November 9, 1901.

THE DRUMMAID; OR, "A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM."

[CONTINUED.]

"Then you can't remember your father?" said Mrs. Morgan, turning round and revealing a fearful face.

"No," said Faith, "he died that very evening. Some one came from the hospital to tell mother what his last words were."

"What were they?" asked Mr. Morgan huskily.

"Verses out of the Bible," answered Faith. "These: 'So foolish was I and ignorant; I was as a beast before thee.' I shall be satisfied when I awake in Thy likeness."

Here Faith paused, and complete silence reigned, until Mrs. Morgan gave a deep sigh, and said, "Ah these things that we don't think or hear much about."

"Yes," said her husband, rousing himself with a loud shout. "But I knew them all when I was a boy. I learned them of my mother. Now, when I hear them again, they seem to come back fresh to me, and all the feelings that I had years ago. Ah, those were happy times!"

There was another silence. Mr. Morgan clasped his hands round his knees, and gazed into the fire with those blood-shot eyes of his, which, however, looked better than they had done for many a long day, because of the tears that glistened in them.

"Isn't there something in Isaiah about 'spending your labor for that which satisfieth not'?" he said, musingly. "I used to know the chapter with that in it by heart."

"Yes," said Faith. "I often read it to mother. It is one of her favorite chapters."

"Well, now, all the marks are out of your cloak," chimed in Mrs. Morgan; "and look, Faith, when it is quite dry they won't show in the least."

Faith got up, and Mrs. Morgan pulled on her.

"I'll take you over," said Mr. Morgan, rising and buttoning his coat. The sad look came back into the child's face as she bade Mrs. Morgan good morning; for, although the cloak was nicely cleaned, had she not to go home to her mother empty-handed?

When they got over the way, and Mr. Morgan had opened the door for her, he said, "I won't come up, dear, you can tell your mother all about your tumble. But the poor widow must be a loser by it, little Faith. Give her this, dear. And with his trembling hand he took the crown-piece from his waistcoat pocket, put it into the child's hand, and, pushing her hand gently in, he closed the door, and went away without saying another word."

Her heart beat wildly with joy. She sprang up the stairs, and with tears and laughter told her mother of the events of the morning.

"And I never thanked him," she said in conclusion; "he wouldn't give me time. Let me go over before I take my things off; may I, mother?"

"Yes, dear, certainly!"

Off went Faith, her face glowing with excitement. Mrs. Morgan, seeing her coming, went to the door. In answer to Faith's inquiries, she said she must run across another time; Mr. Morgan was just gone up the stairs to bed.

"To bed!" Faith feared he was ill; but his reasons for going to bed were truly philosophical.

So the child thanked Mrs. Morgan for the five shillings, presuming that she knew all about it, which was not the case, though Mrs. Morgan did not say so to the child; but directly the door was closed, up the old lady toddled to her husband and tried an explanation.

"Don't ask me to-day," said he. "I will tell you to-morrow why I did it."

Faith cast many an anxious glance out of the window during the day, but no Mr. Morgan did she see go out. Neither on the next day. But on the following, Oh wonder! she saw Mr. and Mrs. Morgan go out arm-in-arm.

"Look, mother!" she cried. "I've never seen them go out together before."

Mrs. Harley smiled, and looked gratified. "Folks often do things at Christmas that they never do at any other time," she said.

Faith watched them go up the street. Mr. Morgan looked ill, she affirmed, and they were walking very slowly. The next day she did not see them at all; but in the afternoon the little servant went out, and on her return she had quite enough to do to answer the door to errand-boys. She had evidently been out to give orders; and it was on Christmas Eve.

After tea, just as Faith and her mother were getting ready to go "up town," the little servant brought a message over from Mrs. Morgan—compliments, and an invitation to the widow and Faith to dine over the way on the morrow. Mrs. Harley accepted it in much astonishment. It was such an unusual thing to receive an invitation of the kind, for since she had been a widow she had not been taken much notice of by neighbors and former friends.

What with going up-town with her mother, and the anticipation of the morrow, Faith was in an ecstasy of enjoyment. Before going to bed that night, however, her pleasure took a more solid turn. "Do you think, mother," she said, "that Mr. Morgan is going to try to be good now I have told him how good father became before he died? I don't think he has been tidy since that day."

"I think not," replied her mother.

"And I do hope that he will try to be good. We shall see as time goes on."

"He seemed to like those texts so much, mother," said Faith. "I hope they'll do him good."

To be continued.

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