

DEAN'S
Illustrated Farning Books.

THE
FRETFUL LITTLE GIRL.



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I ONCE knew a little girl (I fancy many of my readers have known children like her,) who had every comfort—a good home, kind parents, and all the enjoyments of life. Yet amid all, this child was not happy. She had a fretful temper.

She was clever, and read many books, but she did not profit by them. At meal-times, she generally wanted something different from what was on the table; and when her new clothes came home, she always thought she should have preferred a different colour or pattern. Now, this Anne Osborn was not an unkind child; but her temper was peevish, and she saw trouble in verything.

Mrs. Osborn was very charitable, and visited many of the poor in her neighbourhood. One fine June day, Mrs. Osborn and Anne were walking in a pleasant country lane, and the little girl was watching the light fleecy clouds, and saying, "Don't you think it will rain, mamma? Had we not better turn back?" But Mrs. Osborn still went on. "I'm tired, mamma," said Anne. "I should like to sit down on that bank, but I'm afraid there are insects there." Still Mrs. Osborn continued her walk. Suddenly there came a sweet sound borne on the still summer air. It floated to them—a pleasant melody, sung in a clear, full,

soft voice. The walkers paused to listen. "Oh! how lovely!" said Mrs. Osborn. "What is it, mamma?" said Anne, half-frightened. "A singer, child, I should say, a most happy as well as sweet singer." Again came the strain; they recognized a simple melody—that, like the wild flowers, is none the less beautiful because familiar—they walked on faster in the direction of the voice, and the words came distinctly—

“ Around the throne of God in heaven,
Thousands of children stand ;
Children whose sins are all forgiven,
A holy, happy band,
Singing glory, glory, glory.”

A sudden bend in the lane brought the singer into full view. There was a little lowly cottage in a garden, and sitting at the porch, surrounded by osiers and willow-wands, was a boy with an unfinished basket on his lap, at which he was working. The mother and daughter looked and listened in silence. With wonderful quickness the boy's fingers moved. Anne

noticed that he did not look at his work, his head was erect, he seemed to be gazing



upward, while the rich notes of his voice

poured out their gift of sweetness. They crept nearer. Anne could see at once those wide open eyes were blind: yes, the boy sitting there in the sunshine, amid the bloom of flowers, and under the waving trees, saw none of the flush of beauty around him, yet how happy he looked; his face seemed all aglow with the light of a joyful spirit. Again, again the chorus rang out—

Singing glory, glory, glory.

Suddenly he stopped; his quick ear caught the sound of footsteps, and of a hand upon the gate; he turned his head round instinctively.

“Is your mother at home?” said Mrs. Osborn, seeing that she was heard.

“No, ma’am,” replied the boy, “she had to go to work at Farmer Rose’s, and she will not be back till night.”

“What! are you left alone all day?”

“Yes, ma’am, mother was obliged to go; but I’m not lonely, I have my work to do, it’s as much as I shall get done by four o’clock,” he said, twisting away quickly all the time at his basket.

“You do not work after four o’clock, then?” said Mrs. Osborn.

“Not to-night, ma’am; three days a-week I go to the school, to help to teach the children to sing.”

“You learned to sing at the blind-school, I suppose?”

“Yes, ma’am, and since I’ve been home, Mr. Potter, the master, thought I might be o use to the children.”

“I’ve not been able for the last month to call on your mother,” said Mrs. Osborn; “but,” she added, “I wish you to tell her I have been here,” and then she gave her name.

“Oh! ma’am, your are one of the kind ladies who got me into the blind-school! I don’t know how much to thank you, ma’am. I’ve learned a good deal, and I think I can get more than my own living; I want to help mother—to keep her, if I can.”

“My poor boy,” said Mrs. Osborn, “it’s very lonely and hard for you.”

“Oh! not at all, God has been so good to us—indeed, ma’am, I’m as happy as the day is long.”

It was a June day, and Mrs. Osborn, looking more at her daughter than at the boy, said, "The days are nearly at the longest, and you must be happy indeed."

As they walked home, Mrs. Osborn explained how the boy had been three years away at a school for teaching the blind; how he had returned during the last month, and was making himself useful without fee or reward in the school, beyond the joy of his own heart. She did not fail to point out the contentment of his spirit to Anne. Poor and blind, toiling, and often lonely; yet out of his feeble lips God had perfected praise. Anne's eyes streamed with tears, she had felt the lesson, and resolved to try to conquer her peevish temper. It was hard work. But from that day she tried. Whenever she was fretful, she thought of the blind boy; and in the course of time she also was able to say—

"O Lord! I will praise Thee. though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortest me."