

Whiter than Snow
& *Little Dot*



Mrs. O. F. Walton

WHITER THAN SNOW

AND

LITTLE DOT



“Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.”



BY
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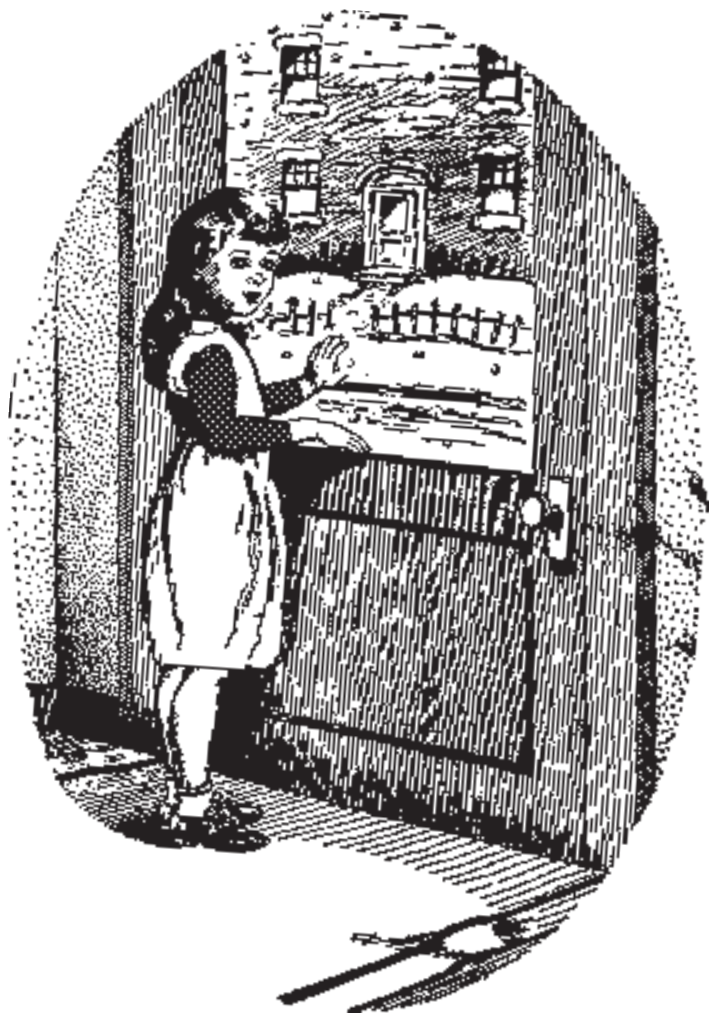
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WHITER THAN SNOW

CHAPTER 1

Do you love to see the snow fall? I am sure all children who live in the country do. It looks so pretty, whitening the branches of the trees, and covering all the ground with a vast white sheet.

But it was not on fields and trees that little Nelly Rogers watched the snow descend; it was in a dark, dull, narrow street of a big manufacturing town. Still Nelly thought the snow very pretty. The soft white flakes looked so different from everything else in that smoky, dirty place. It seemed a wonder that anything so pure should come down there and rest on the blackened windowsills of the old tumble-down houses, and make a nice white road of the usually dirty alleys and streets.

Nelly stood at the door for a long time. Her little face looked very pinched and blue, but she seemed unmindful of the cold, in the enjoyment of watching the fast-falling snow. It was very seldom she

saw anything so pure and beautiful in that district of the city.

While she looked, three little words floated into her mind—"whiter than snow." She knew she had heard them somewhere; where was it? She thought a long time, then she remembered they were Bible words. Yes, she had learned them a long time ago, and there was more that came after that; but though Nelly tried hard to remember the rest of the verse, it would not come back to her, only those three little words—"whiter than snow."

Again and again she repeated them to herself, wondering what could be whiter than snow. It was certainly something she had never seen, still she felt sure that there was something whiter even than the pure white snow that was falling thick and fast around her, for the Bible said so, and though poor Nelly's knowledge was very small, she knew the Bible was God's Word, and therefore it must be true.

But now the snow had ceased falling, and Nelly turned regretfully from the door, and went in. Oh, what a contrast it was to the snow outside! How black and dirty everything looked in the dark, comfortless room!

Nelly sat down close to the fire, and tried to warm herself; for now that she no longer had anything pleasant to look at she realized how cold she was.

Life was lonely for poor little Nelly, for she had no brothers and sisters. Her mother died soon after Nelly was born, leaving the baby in charge of her grandmother, who took very good care of the little motherless infant. As soon as Nelly was old enough to understand, she began to teach her the first lessons from the Bible every child should learn. But when Nelly was only five years old, the pious old woman, too, was called to the heavenly home. Since then the child had had no one to teach her.

That is where our story begins. Three years after her grandmother's death,

Nelly had almost forgotten all she had ever learned. Yet those early lessons were not altogether lost. It was the result of one of them that made Nelly think of these three Bible words while watching the falling snow. The seed had taken root, and, though long buried, was going to spring up and bear fruit.

James Rogers was not an unkind man, but he did not understand children. It never occurred to him that while he was at work all day long in the iron foundry, his little girl must be very lonely! He supposed she went into the neighbor's houses, or amused herself playing with the children in the street. But the neighbors were all too much occupied with their own business and cares to trouble themselves about the quiet little child who never troubled them, and she did not like playing with the children in the street, they were so rude and quarrelsome.

Nelly, however, had one friend. In the lower room of one of the houses across

the street there lived an old Irishman. Micky M'Guinness was a strange old man. The walls of his little room were lined with small cages, for he sold birds. There were canaries, goldfinches, bullfinches, and many other kinds of birds. Nelly used to go and spend hours in Micky's room, listening to the sweet singing, and helping the old man care for the little songsters.

She was naturally silent, and from living alone, the old man hardly ever talked to anyone but himself and his birds: nevertheless he was very fond of Nelly, her quiet ways just suited him. Mutual love for the birds had first drawn them together, and now a strong friendship existed between the two. But to go back to the beginning of our story, Nelly sat a long time by the fire, trying to remember what it was that was whiter than snow.

Suddenly a bright thought came to her—perhaps her old friend knew. She went again to the door, and looked out.

It was getting dark, and the air was intensely cold. It was snowing heavily again. The light of the bright fire in old Micky's room was lighting up his window. Nelly could see the ruddy glow and was sure he was home. So, her little feet sinking deep in snow at every step, she made her way across the street.

The old man was sitting before the fire in a large wooden armchair. The birds had all gone to sleep, so that the room was silent. Nelly drew up a little three-legged stool, as the old man signified to her, and nestled into her favorite snug position by his knee.

"Micky," she asked, after silently watching him for some time, "do you know the Bible?"

Micky's head turned as he sat upright. He stared at the child in wonderment.

"Do you, Micky?" Nelly repeated.

"Well, I can't say I do, rightly."

The child looked disappointed.

"Why, what did you want to know

for?" said the old man, seeing the troubled look on her face.

"Oh, I thought you could tell me something! Did you never learn any Bible verses, Micky?"

"Well no, dear. You see where I lived when I was a lad, there was no school within three miles, and so I never learned to read. To be sure, I've heard bits of the Bible now and then, but it's a long time since; it's little I remember now."

Having thus explained himself, Micky resumed his comfortable position, and for some minutes neither spoke. Nelly's face looked very grave.

"Micky," she said at last, in a low frightened tone, "do you think we'll ever get to heaven if we don't know the Bible?"

"Well, dear, I hope to get there before long. I'm an old man now, and it's near time I was there. You'll get there anyway, for you're a good little thing, and never did harm to anyone."

"Oh Micky, I wish I knew the Bible; I

don't think I'll get there if I don't!"

As the child spoke she pressed closer to the old man's side, looking anxiously in his face. Again he turned towards the girl, and regarded in astonishment the little pale face before him, so anxious and earnest. Then laying his hand on Nelly's head, he replied, "Why you look almost as if you were going now. What ails you child?"

"I don't know, only I'm tired." Nelly laid her head down wearily upon the old man's knee and presently fell fast asleep. Micky's comfort was not so complete as before, and every now and then his eye would rest uneasily upon the pale cheek half covered by the thin little hands. A noise in the street woke Nelly with a start. She looked around in a bewildered way, then remembering where she was, got up to leave.

"And must you go, dear?" said the old man. "Stay and have a cup of tea."

Nelly looked wistfully back at the snug place she had just left, but father

would be coming home, she remembered, and she must get his supper ready. So, shivering, she crossed the cold, dark street and entered her desolate home.

CHAPTER 2

Nell, is that you?" cried a loud harsh voice, and a cross-looking woman appeared at the head of the stairs. "Where have you been all this time? I had to re-light the fire you let go out, troublesome child. And a pretty thing, too, after a hard day's work, to have to go to the pump because you forgot to get the water." Nelly looked frightened; but before she could make any reply the woman turned away, telling her not to stand there any longer, but to be quick and get her father's supper ready.

Mrs. Millar was poor Nelly's great dread. She was always scolding her for something or other; so it was a great relief to Nelly when the woman's work kept her out all day, as it generally did. She occupied the room over the kitchen, paying Mr. Rogers for her lodging by taking care of the house and doing all the work Nelly was not equal to.

Poor woman! Hers was a hard life,

too. This had done much to harden her heart and embitter her spirit. She had no children, and her husband was at sea. Sometimes, however, Joe Millar would come to the town, spend all his earnings in drink; and then his wife would have to support him. After loud complaints and a good deal of quarrelling she would give him more money to squander away. And so, when Joe went back to his ship, all his wife's hard-earned savings were gone too, and she was left to toil on and scrape together a little more, to be swept off in the same manner at his next visit. It was no wonder she was unhappy.

Very different was she as the bright-looking Jane Ellwood, the pride of her village home, a little hot-tempered, certainly, but so lively and warmhearted. Her mother warned her when first the fine, careless, sunburnt sailor came and appeared to be more than casually interested in her attractive daughter. But Jane tossed her head and said, "He

meant nothing." She liked to listen while Joe talked to her of foreign ports and great cities he had seen. Finally she longed to know more of the world, of which then she knew so little. Then when Joe Millar said he wanted to marry her, Mark Ellwood declared he would never give his daughter to a sailor of whom he knew nothing, he must first know more of his character. Jane's temper was up. Why should they think Joe bad? It was unjust; she did not think him so, and marry him she would. So off she went, leaving a father in anger and a mother in tears.

Soon after their marriage Joe went away to sea and Jane was obliged to look for work. For years she never saw him. Then Joe wrote to say he was coming home, and with both their earnings they would live comfortably, and he would go no more to sea. So Jane left her position, and thought they would be happy.

But Joe had got into idle drinking

habits, and before very long all their money was gone. Still his wife struggled hard to earn enough to support them both. It was no use. Bitterly she reproached her husband, till, weary of her complaints, he took to his sailor life again. Jane did not have the courage to go back to her former position, so she lived as already told, working hard and saving up what she could. After all, Joe was still her husband, and she would do what she could for him.

Tired after her hard day's work, Mrs. Millar sat down to brood over her misfortunes; while downstairs, Nelly wearily moved about, getting supper ready. A heavy step announced her father's approach. Presently the door opened, and a hardened working man entered.

"Bitter cold night; supper ready? That's a good girl." So saying, Mr. Rogers sat down to the table and devoted all his energies to making a hearty meal of what was set before him. Indeed, so entirely engrossed was he, that he never

noticed Nelly's tired, worn look, or that she ate nothing. His appetite satisfied at last, he drew a newspaper out of his pocket, at the same time asking Nelly to put a log on the fire. Poor Nelly went to the corner of the room where there was a pile of firewood and lifted one of the logs—it was very heavy. Nelly felt so weak she could hardly move it, and yet there was no smaller one. She looked at her father—wouldn't he help her? He was busy with his newspaper, so Nelly thought she would make one brave effort. It was as much as the child could do; but she succeeded at length in carrying the heavy log across the room and placing it on the fire. Her whole body ached with the exertion.

Having scanned the contents of his paper, Mr. Rogers went out to spend the rest of his evening drinking and carousing, as had become his custom of late.

Nelly cleared away the things, and then sat down by the fire. She felt very miserable and unhappy, she hardly



knew why—poor child! Little did she know how ill she was. She had no one to talk to, nothing to amuse her but watching the little blue and red flames that seemed to play with one another around the log. Then she crept up to her little lonely garret, and lay down all alone in the dark, without the blessed knowledge that she was in a heavenly Father's keeping, and that His holy angels were watching around her bed.

Mr. Rogers came home at a late hour, and as he was climbing the stairs with unsteady step, the sound of Nelly's distressed coughing, now and then mingled with low sobs, caught his ear. He stopped and listened.

Mrs. Millar was still up. She had recently become aware that he frequently came home under the influence of liquor and was watching for his return. Hearing him coming up the steps, she looked out of her room, then burst out in a complaining tone—"And is that what you're coming to, Rogers? It's well your

poor wife's spared seeing her trouble."

Had he been perfectly sober, Mr. Rogers would have angrily resented the woman's remarks.

"I say, missis," he stammered out, "does anything ail the child?"

"Ail her! that cough's killing her, that's what ails her."

CHAPTER 3

Was it an unpleasant dream he had had, that something was the matter with his child? But one look at Nelly the next morning convinced James Rogers it was reality.

“Nell, what were you crying for last night?” he asked her.

Nelly looked ashamed. “I couldn’t help it,” she said; “it was so cold, and the cough hurt me.”

The father was startled. The child’s face looked just as her mother’s had when she was ill. He always knew the little girl was not very strong, but then she never complained. For the first time, when he went away to his work that day, he was troubled at the thought of the lonely little one at home. James Rogers felt ashamed to think how the increasing love for drink was making him even neglect his child, and yet it was very hard to give it up. All that day there was a fierce battle going on in the man’s

mind. He finally resolved to stop drinking for awhile.

The snow fell heavily during most of the day, and Nelly found some amusement in watching it. She did so love those soft white flakes, and again and again she wondered what could be whiter.

That evening, when supper was over, the father drew his chair over to the fire, and lifted Nelly on his knee. He told her he would take her some day to the foundry, and show her all the wonderful machines. Her little face lighted up with pleasure, and she looked so eager and happy that her father reassured himself she would soon be well.

Presently the door opened.

Jim, aren't you coming out tonight?" asked a rough voice. "Here, come on, let's drink over at Jake's."

Alas for Rogers' halfhearted resolutions!

"I don't think I'll go with you tonight," he said, slowly.

Nelly's eyes were fixed wistfully upon her father's face.

"Why, what are you going to do?" asked the other.

"Nothing; but I've decided to stay at home tonight."

"Oh, don't be so stupid! What's got into you, Jim? You're generally not so fond of staying at home."

Jim looked uncomfortable, and Nelly took his large rough hand in both hers, and held it tight, as if to keep him.

"Come on Jim, let's get going," said Ned impatiently.

Mr. Rogers felt ashamed of holding back any longer, so he put Nelly down from his knee.

"Well, then, I'll go along with you," he said, moving towards the door. Then he turned and saw the little girl standing by the fireside watching him mournfully.

"I say, Ned, the little one will be very lonesome."

"Well, bring her along to my house,

she can stay with my wife and the children till we come back; but make it snappy.”

“Nell, wrap yourself up warm and come,” said Mr. Rogers; and Nelly put on her hat and coat and placed her little hand into her father’s, quite pleased to accompany him. The night was bitterly cold. The snow which covered the ground crackled under their feet. A sharp wind pierced through Nelly’s cloak and made her teeth chatter, and her whole body shiver. The men walked very fast, and her poor little aching limbs could hardly keep up with them. When her cough became distressing, she wished she had stayed at home. Then Mr. Rogers stopped, lifted her up in his arms, and carried her the rest of the way.

“Here we are,” said Ned Harrison, as he opened the door. “Mary, keep this child till we come back.”

A tidy-looking woman came forward and led Nelly over to the fire.

“Poor child, are you ill?” she asked,

as the bright flame showed Nelly's little thin white face.

A fit of coughing prevented the child from answering.

"Poor little thing, and no mother to take care of her," the kind woman said softly, and she gave the child a compassionate kiss, which made Nelly look up in her face and smile a grateful, winning smile.

"Now, maybe, you'd like to play with the children," Mrs. Harrison suggested, as several little ones gathered around her. Nelly did not join in, but sat watching the others, looking quite content. Sometimes her eyes followed the busy movements of Mrs. Harrison and her eldest daughter Ruth. It was Saturday night and they were busily making preparations for the next day. Then her eyes wandered around the tidy room where the firelight danced and flickered.

How easy it was to be happy and contented in a bright cheerful home like

this! How different from poor Nelly's! But the mother's face looked grave. She knew too well where her husband had gone.

Mrs. Harrison was a godly woman; not in name only, but in deed and in truth, and it was her one great trial that her husband was not a Christian. When she married him she was equally careless of the "one thing needful." When her first little baby died, and the young mother's heart was bowed down with grief, the good words of a kind lady, a church visitor in the district were the means of bringing her to the Saviour. Soon she learned to thank God for the affliction which had been so sanctified. That God would touch her husband's heart was Mrs. Harrison's constant and believing prayer, and she felt sure He would do so in His own good time.

Mr. Harrison was a kind husband and father, and an honest, industrious workman. There was little danger of his getting into intemperate habits, as he

naturally disliked strong drink. It was to join his friends, hear the news, discuss politics, or play cards, that led him to frequent Jake's Place.

Their work finished, the mother took the little ones off to bed, and Ruth came and sat down beside Nelly. The two children soon became friends though Ruth was a good deal older. It did not take long until the older girl was acquainted with Nelly's short history. She was sorry for the poor child who said she had no one to play with, never went to school, and was generally alone all day. Ruth thought she would never desire to change places with her.

After they had talked a little while, Ruth ran off to get her Bible. She must look over her lesson for Sunday school before bedtime. Nelly looked wistfully at the Book and into Ruth's face as the girl was repeating her verses over and over to herself. Nelly wondered in her own mind whether Ruth would be likely to know more than old Micky.

“Ruth,” she said presently.

“What, Nelly?”

“Do you know what’s whiter than snow?”

“Whiter than snow? No, I think snow’s the whitest thing there is.”

“Oh! but there’s something whiter. I know there is. I remember the Bible says so; but I’ve forgotten all but that.”

“Maybe you’re thinking of the angel’s robes, they’re white as snow—but wait—I think I know now what you mean; it’s in the Psalms. I’ll find it.”

Ruth turned over the leaves of her Bible unsuccessfully.

“Oh, here’s mother, she’ll know! Mother, where in the Bible is ‘whiter than snow’?”

“The fifty-first Psalm, Ruth; don’t you remember we were reading it the other night?”

“Oh yes, mother, it was a beautiful psalm! Now I have it. Here, Nelly, look!”
“But I can’t read it,” said Nelly, sadly.
“Read it to me.”

Ruth read through the Psalm: “ ‘Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

“ ‘Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts; and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and

renew a right spirit within me.

“ ‘Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.

“ ‘O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.’ ”

Nelly listened with fixed attention.

“But still I don’t know,” she said, when Ruth had finished. “What does it mean ‘wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow?’ ”

Ruth looked a little puzzled how to explain.

“Mother,” she said, “you can tell her better than I can.”

“Whose words are they, Ruth?”

“David’s.”

“Well, tell Nelly what David wanted.”

“He wanted to have his sins washed away, and then his heart would be whiter than snow. Isn’t that it, Mother?”

“But how could his sins be washed away?” Nelly asked.

Mrs. Harrison looked at her pityingly.

“Don’t you know, child, who died for you, to take away your sins?”

“Jesus—Granny taught me about Him, but it’s so long ago I forget it all.”

“Well, the Bible says, ‘The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.’ He shed His blood for poor sinners like us, that we might be washed, and have our hearts made clean, and make us fit for heaven.”

Nelly’s anxious eyes were fixed on Mrs. Harrison. She would have liked to have heard more, but just then the door

opened and the two men walked in. Mr. Rogers' heated face and unsteady step were too evident proof that he had been drinking too much. Mrs. Harrison looked uneasily at him, then at Nelly.

"The child had better stay here," she said firmly. "It's too cold for her to be out with such a cough as she's got."

Incapable of reasoning, Mr. Rogers showed a dogged determination not to go home without the child.

Saying good-bye to Mrs. Harrison and Ruth, who promised to go and see her soon, Nelly confidently placed her little hand in her father's, and trusted herself without any fear to his uncertain guidance through the dark winding streets. The way seemed very long, and this time poor Nelly was not carried; but cold and fatigue were alike forgotten by her, because of one great all-absorbing idea. Every now and then the words escaped her lips—timidly, as if uncertain where they were going, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

CHAPTER 4

Sunday came, a short cessation to the restless motion and weary toil of the busy city. To Ruth Harrison and her mother, Sunday was a very happy day. The rest was very sweet to the mother after the six days' toil, but sweeter still was the service of the house of God, the words of divine truth and heavenly consolation, which her meek heart loved so well. Ruth's face, always cheerful, seemed to wear a more than usually happy expression on Sundays.

This morning, as she looked forward to her own pleasures, she wondered what Sunday was like to poor little Nelly; was it just the same as any other day? Ruth pitied her very much. Her warm affectionate heart had been drawn towards the little stranger the night before; and now, when she knelt down to say her morning prayer, Nelly was included in the petition for a blessing on all she loved.

At an early hour, the Harrison children started off to Sunday school, their fresh tidy appearance contrasting with that of most of the children they passed in the streets. As Ruth walked along, leading her youngest little brother by the hand, she was making an effort to drill him in learning his memory verse. It was not an easy matter to divert his attention from all the attractive sights and sounds.

Ruth's own lesson was always well prepared, for to study God's Word was her great delight. The lesson today was about the little captive maid, who was the means of recovering her master from leprosy. The teacher spoke very earnestly about opportunities of doing good, and being useful to others, especially by leading the wandering ones to the Lord Jesus Christ; none of them were too young to be employed in the service of God, and the highest work was to try and bring others to love Him.

The lesson was not lost upon Ruth.

She thought of the poor little girl who knew not how the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin; and, joyful at the opportunity offered her, she resolved to be Nelly's teacher. So that afternoon, when the other children were getting ready to go with their father for a walk into the country, Ruth told her mother she would like to go and see Nelly Rogers.

"That would be very kind and the poor little girl would enjoy it, I know," said her mother; "but if you go now, you'll lose out on the walk, Ruth." Mrs. Harrison knew, too, what a treat the Sunday walk was to Ruth, how she enjoyed her father's company, and how much she liked getting out to some of the quiet, pleasant roads beyond the smoky city. But Ruth said she wanted very much to see Nelly, she thought she could teach her something. The mother looked pleased, and silently prayed for a blessing on her child's endeavors. Ruth took her Bible, and set out. Through narrow lanes and streets the youthful



missionary threaded her way, happy in her heart that she was doing something for the Lord.

Just as she was considering which house was most like the one Nelly had described as her home, a door opened, and Mr. Rogers appeared dressed in his working clothes.

“Have you come to see Nelly?” he asked, when Ruth came up. “That’s fine! She was just wondering if you’d come today, and now I’m going out, so will you stay with her a bit, like a good girl?”

Ruth said she would, and pointing to the door of the room where Nelly was to be found, Mr. Rogers walked away. Ruth went in.

“Oh, I’m so glad you’ve come!” exclaimed Nelly, when she saw her.

“Well now I’m going to stay a good bit, and look,” said Ruth, holding up her Bible, “I’ve brought this to read to you.”

Nelly’s pale face flushed with pleasure.

“Oh, I’m so glad!” she said eagerly, “and won’t you read me again what you read last night, about David praying to be washed and made whiter than snow?”

Ruth seated herself by Nelly’s side, opened her Bible, and read the psalm. When she had finished, Nelly told her she had been thinking about David’s prayer ever since last night, and wondered whether her heart could be made so very white; she would like it to be. Ruth told her how the blood of Jesus washes out every stain of sin.

“Then I must pray to God,” said Nelly. “Tell me how, Ruth. I don’t know.”

“Oh Nelly, do you never say any prayers?”

“No; because I have no one to say them to.

“No one to say them to! What do you mean, Nelly?” asked Ruth in a tone of astonishment.

“I used to say them to Granny, but when she died I had no one to say them to. Father wouldn’t listen, and so I left

off, and now I've forgotten the words."

"Nelly, now you must say them to God; you don't need anyone else to hear."

"But what shall I say? I'm afraid, Ruth."

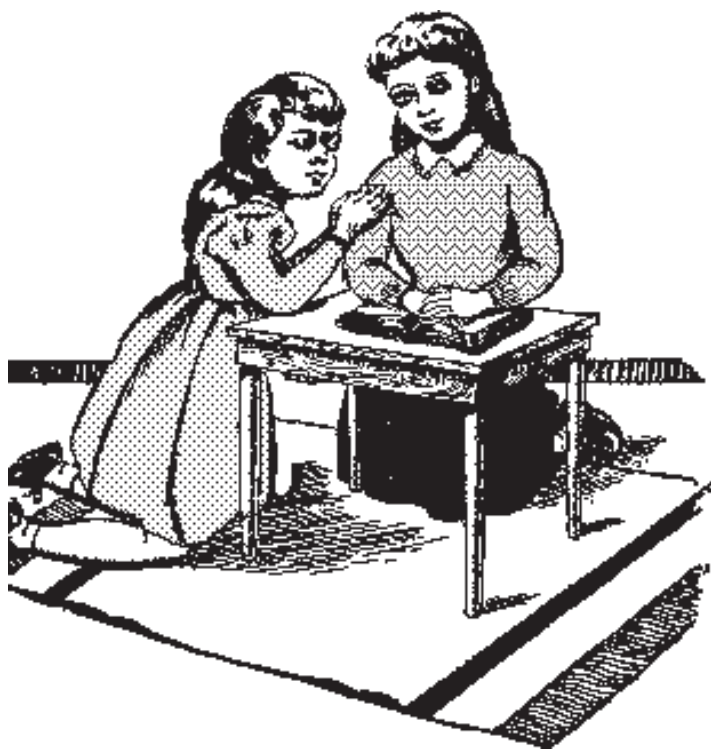
But Ruth told her she need not fear, for though God was so great and so holy, yet He was a kind Father to all who put their trust in Him; and she had only to tell Him how sorry she was for all her sins, and ask Him to forgive her for Jesus' sake.

"And may I say 'Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow?' " Nelly asked.

"Yes, you may say that too. Nelly, shall we pray now?"

And the two children knelt down, and the elder simply, but trustingly, asked their Father in heaven to bless Nelly, to forgive her her sins, and to make her one of His faithful children for Jesus' sake.

"And God really heard us?" said Nelly, when they rose from their knees.



“Yes, Nelly, and He’ll do what we ask Him.” An expression of sweet peace rested on the child’s face. The good Shepherd had sought out His little wandering lamb, and was going to bring her safe into His heavenly fold.

Then Ruth read her own favorite chapters about our blessed Lord’s cruel sufferings and death. The tears filled Nelly’s eyes when she heard of the crown of thorns that pierced His holy brow, but when it came to their nailing Him to the dreadful cross, she fairly sobbed. But Ruth read on, of His resurrection from the dark grave, and how in a bright cloud Jesus ascended up again to His own home in heaven, and then Nelly was comforted. Every now and then Ruth stopped to make some explanation to her attentive listener, or answer Nelly’s eager questions. The short winter’s day was nearly gone, and Ruth felt she must be going too.

“Nelly,” she said, “would you like me to sing you a hymn before I go?”

“Oh yes, do!”

And Ruth began in a clear sweet voice to sing the Evening Hymn—

“Glory to thee, my God, this night,
For all the blessings of the light!
Keep me, oh, keep me, King of kings,
Beneath the shadow of thy wings.

“Teach me to live, that I may dread
The grave as little as my bed;
Teach me to die that so I may
Rise glorious on the Judgment day.”

Ruth was glad to see the look of pleasure on Nelly's face, and promising to come and see her very often, she bid her good-bye.

Nelly was not the only listener to Ruth's hymn; the sound had reached Jane Millar's ears and brought her to the head of the stairs to listen to the song. There was a time when her voice was as fresh and clear, and the familiar tune called to mind her younger days

when on peaceful Sunday evenings in the quiet village church, her voice used to join in singing the same beautiful hymn. It was a long time since she had heard it. It awoke many recollections of the past, and bitterly feeling the contrast of her present situation, Jane turned to her room to weep over her misfortunes.

CHAPTER 5

We must now take a peep into the small dark room opposite, filled with little feathered inmates, and see what sort of a Sunday the old man was spending there. Old Micky M'Guinness was sitting, as usual, in his large wooden armchair before the fire, but this afternoon an uneasy, pained expression rested on his face. Well it might, for neither mind nor body was at rest. Rheumatism had attacked his aged frame with more than usual severity, owing to the extreme inclemency of the weather: and during the night, as the old man lay awake with pain, Nelly's question seemed repeated in his ears over and over again, "Micky, will we ever get to heaven if we don't know the Bible?" All day long uneasy thoughts had filled his mind. He felt he wouldn't last much longer, and after all, perhaps he wasn't going the right way. Then the child's little worn, pale face seemed

constantly before him. Maybe, he thought, she wouldn't last much longer either. Where were they both going?

Like many of his sort, Micky very seldom went to church, and as little Nelly never went there either, having no one to take her, she was in the habit of spending most of Sunday in her old friend's company. This day she was not left without a companion at home, for her father had stayed with his little girl the whole morning. She was evidently the worse for last night's cold, late walk, and Mr. Rogers felt angry with himself that he had allowed Harrison to persuade him to go out of the house. Again he resolved never to drink again.

Old Micky wondered that his little friend had not paid him her accustomed visit. He feared the child was ill, and felt a strong desire to hobble across the street and see. So taking his thick-knotted stick from its corner by the fireplace, he rose with difficulty; but his limbs were too stiff and crippled to allow

him to walk; and, with a groan, the old man dropped down into his chair again.

It was nearly dark when the door opened, and a little figure glided in, and kneeling by the old man's side, Nelly seized both his hands in hers, and looking earnestly up into his face exclaimed, "Oh Micky, I have found it, I've found it all!"

Then she began and told him all that had happened since she had last seen him, the kind friends she had found, and the wondrous story Ruth had read to her. In broken childish language, Nelly repeated all she could remember. The old man listened eagerly, only interrupting her with an occasional "Ay." Nelly told him that the blood of Jesus washes the sinner's heart, and makes it whiter than snow and fit for heaven.

"And now," she said joyfully, "you and I can go to heaven, can't we, Micky?"

"May God Almighty bring us there," said the old man devoutly. "I'll not be much longer here, that's clear."



“Oh Micky, but you mustn’t go before I do!” The child pressed closer the hand she still held in hers. Here their conversation was interrupted, for Mr. Rogers put his head in at the door and told Nelly to come home, as it was growing late and cold. The child wonderingly obeyed; her father’s care was something new and pleasant to her.

The winter wore on, and Nelly’s health became gradually worse. At her father’s desire Mrs. Harrison had taken her to a doctor. Dr. Hooper was a kind man. He looked pityingly at the child and gave her something to relieve her cough and the pain in her side, and gently raising the little drooping face, he said, “Medicine will do you no good, my little girl. You may just do what you like, and try and be as happy as you can.”

Mrs. Harrison understood the doctor’s meaning, but she had not heart to communicate it to the father or Ruth. Both, she thought, would find out the truth quite soon enough. Still, though she

was growing weaker nearly every day, Nelly's life was much happier now than it used to be. Her father was very kind to her. He had succeeded in keeping his resolution, and never spent his evenings drinking now, but always stayed at home with Nelly. After supper he would sit with the little girl on his knee, until she fell asleep with her head nestled on his shoulder.

Ruth came to see her every day. Nelly loved to talk of heaven and to listen to the sweet hymns Ruth sang to her, or to hear the lessons Ruth had learned at Sunday school. And Ruth was teaching her to read. Nelly did not find it hard to learn, for she was a capable child, and besides, she remembered nearly all the letters which she had once learned from her grandmother. One of the little girl's amusements had been to spell out the large letters on the signs over the doors of the shops, and so she had kept up her knowledge of the alphabet.

It was the child's chief delight when

she was all alone, to sit with her grandmother's large Bible on her knee, spelling out the words. If she came upon a long or difficult one, it was reserved until Ruth came to help her. In her simple way she explained what seemed hard to understand. Then, when she had mastered all the long words in a chapter, she would hasten across the street to read it to her old friend. Micky M'Guinness loved the Book as much as she did now, and he also loved to hear the child, unconscious of being his teacher, talking in her simple way of the great truths of man's salvation. The childish explanation was just what was needed for his darkened but anxious mind.

To Nelly's great delight, she had gone to church a few Sundays, first with Ruth, and then with her father. It was a long time since James Rogers had entered a church door, and at first he was very unwilling to go, but Nelly pleaded so earnestly, that he went to please her.

And now that she was too ill to accompany him, it made her so unhappy if her father missed attending one Sunday, that, rather than give her pain, Rogers became a regular churchgoer.

One Sunday morning, Nelly was sitting with the large Bible on her knee, but her eyes had wandered off the page, and she was singing in a sweet low tone a favorite hymn she had learned from Ruth, beginning—

“Oh, where shall rest be found,
Rest for the weary soul—”

Mrs. Millar had come in and was straightening up the room a bit. She was getting ready to go out and spend the Sunday in her usual way, visiting the neighbors, listening to their various tales of hardship, and pouring out her own. Her ear caught the words Nelly was singing.

“Well,” she thought, “if ever a weary soul wanted rest, it’s mine.”

When Nelly had finished her song she sat silently for some time and

watched the woman's busy movements.

"Jane," she said at length, rather timidly, "why don't you go to church?"

"Just because I'm too miserable," answered Jane shortly; then she added to herself—"Oh, there was a time when I was never absent from the house of God."

"But," persisted Nelly, "in church they pray for miserable people; do go."

The child's anxious tone surprised Jane. She looked up and saw the wistful eyes fixed upon her with an earnest expression.

"Well, perhaps I will," she said. "Maybe I'll hear something of that rest you were singing about just now."

"Oh yes, you will, and I'll ask God that you may find it," said the child eagerly.

"Well, well, who'd have thought I'd ever be seen there in such clothes as these. But what does it matter? I've nothing to be proud of now," and with a weary sigh Mrs. Millar left the house,

while Nelly knelt down to pray that God would give her rest.

Unwilling to meet with any of her neighbors lest they should ask her where she was going, Jane Millar passed the nearest church and entered a larger one some distance from home. Here she hoped that she would be hidden in the crowd.

It was still early, and the great building was nearly empty. Jane took her seat close to the door. The place was very silent. A strange feeling came over her. She was in the house of God; she was tempted to get up and go away, but something held her. Old associations crowded upon her memory as she found herself again within the sacred walls—recollections of the little village church, the good old parson whose instructions she had so heedlessly neglected, the kind parents she had so disobediently left. The congregation was fast assembling, but, with her head bowed down, Jane looked at no one. The service be-

gan—the well-known words of the first hymn struck a tender chord in that poor worn heart. As it proceeded, her attention became more and more riveted and it was almost with sobs that she joined in the response which followed the opening song, “Have mercy upon us, miserable sinners.”

The preacher gave out his text slowly and solemnly, “There remaineth, therefore, a rest for the people of God.” The attention of the weary, worn-out woman was instantly fixed. The sermon was earnest and impressive, such as gladdened the hearts of many in that crowded congregation. Their thoughts were raised above the bustle, toil, and excitement of the busy, restless city to the calm and holy rest that remaineth.

Then Jane returned home. She said nothing, but went straight up to her room, and when Nelly saw her next, her eyes were red from weeping. From that Sunday on her manner gradually changed. She was no longer cross and

fretful, but became quiet and subdued, bearing her cross with meekness. Her treatment of Nelly also changed and she liked to listen to her singing hymns, and often when Nelly was tired of reading to herself, Jane would take the Bible out of her hands and read to her. When the next Sunday came around, Jane again went to church.

CHAPTER 6

Months passed, and when the long, cold winter was gone and spring had come with its glad sunshine and warmth, Nelly was not much more than a shadow. But though her body and strength were wasting away, her little face looked peaceful, and even happy.

Hardly a day passed that Ruth did not call on her. The affectionate, warm-hearted girl was always thinking of what she could do to cheer her sick friend. She had given her a plant with beautiful pink and white blossoms, because Nelly loved flowers—this and a little golden canary in an old rusty cage, a present from old Micky, pleased her most. She could read quite well now. Ruth lent her all the books she possessed, but the Bible was Nelly's favorite. Every day she carried it over to read to the old bird-seller who prized it as much as she did, for it was no longer an unfamiliar Book to him.

One day while visiting a district of his overcrowded parish, the pastor of a neighboring church discovered the existence of old Micky. Here was one who needed instruction, whose days on earth were numbered. From that time the old man was frequently visited by the pastor or one of his assistants, and the way of salvation was made plain to him.

Micky had grown very feeble; he was no longer able to go out on the streets selling his birds, so he had disposed of them all to another bird-seller with the exception of a few, which the old man could not make up his mind to part with. The sum which they brought was enough to support him for the short remaining time of his life.

Ruth and her mother often visited old Micky, and ministered to his comfort, both body and soul; but there was no one he was so glad to see as Nelly. She was like an angel visitant, bringing light and joy to the old man's heart and home. The old man and the little child

were fast nearing their eternal home, and so they loved to read and talk of that city "which hath no need of the sun."

In the fading light of an April evening Mr. Rogers sat by the window reading. His little girl was on his knee, her hand resting wearily on his shoulder. She lay very quiet, but her eyes were anxiously fixed on her father as he turned the pages of his newspaper. At last he finished it and threw it on the table.

"Father," said Nelly, "is it too dark to read any more?"

"No, not close to the window, Nell."

"Then will you read something for me now?"

"Read you what, child?"

"Something out of the Bible. Please Father; I'll get it." Nelly got down from his knee and brought him her Bible.

"What shall I read, Nell?" he asked, taking it out of her hands.

"Read the fourteenth chapter of John first, and then, maybe, you'll read something else. It's not there, father," said

Nelly, as he turned over the pages looking for it.

“Well, you’ll have to find it, Nelly.”

Nelly turned to the place quickly and then resumed her former position on her father’s knee, only this time her eyes were closed and a sweet peaceful expression rested on the little worn features.

“ ‘Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

“ ‘Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. . . .

“ ‘If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth. . . . I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you. . . . Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. . . .’ ”

When the chapter was finished, Nelly’s thin little fingers turned over to the seventh chapter of Revelation.

“Read that now, please, Father, from the ninth verse,” and Nelly turned her head around until her face was buried in his shoulder, and clasped her little arms tightly round his neck.

Mr. Rogers read, but his voice trembled toward the end, ‘ “After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and

palms in their hands; And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

“ ‘And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

“ ‘And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither

thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. ' ”

“Will that do now, Nelly?” he asked.

“Yes, thank you, Father.”

For some time neither spoke, but when it was too dark for them to see each other's faces, Nelly turned hers around and said in a very low voice, “Father, I think I shall be going there very soon.”

“Where?” said her father, understanding, but unwilling to believe her words.

Nelly answered dreamily, her eyes fixed upon the little bit of pale sky just visible above the tops of the tall dark houses across the street: “Where they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed

them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

There was another long silence, and Nelly lay so still in his arms that her father thought she was asleep. Great tears were slowly coursing down his cheeks. Presently the child spoke again. “Father, you’ll be very lonely.”

“Very lonely,” repeated Mr. Rogers, and pressed his child still closer to him.

“Father, you’ll be *sure* and come there too?” and her gentle tone startled him in its deep earnestness.

“I don’t know, Nell; I’m afraid I’m too bad.”

“Oh Father, but God can make you good; won’t you ask Him? I did, and He heard me and forgave all my sins; and He’ll hear you, too. Father, say what I did, ‘Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.’ Yes,” she went on, “I know you’ll come to heaven, I’ve asked God so often.”

The father’s heart was too full to

speaking, but a silent petition went up that moment to the throne of grace, "The Lord have mercy on my soul."

CHAPTER 7

For some days Nelly was too weak to leave her bed. She did not suffer a great deal of pain, but felt very tired. Jane Millar seldom left the child's bedside, and a kind and gentle nurse she was. She could repeat many hymns learned in her childhood, which Nelly loved to hear her sing. She knew which were Nelly's favorite passages in the Bible and would read them to her over and over again, for the child never tired of hearing them.

Often the little girl would talk so touchingly of the goodness and love of God, and of the beautiful home to which she was going, that the woman had to listen in silence. Jane Millar was learning many lessons of faith and hope at the child's bedside. Often she had to turn her head away so that Nelly might not see the tears that would come.

One Sunday morning the child seemed better. She asked to be taken

downstairs, so her father carried her down to the room below, and fixed a comfortable place for her.

Mr. Rogers sat beside her the whole day, and he told her he would stay with her for several days to come, for he had obtained leave of absence from his work for a week. Nelly smiled, then looked grave.

“Father,” she said, as the church bells began ringing for morning service, “you’ll go there, won’t you?”

“Not today, Nell.”

“No, not today—I mean when I’m gone.”

Her father promised he would.

“Father,” she added, “you’ll read the Bible often, won’t you? Will you bring it to me now?”

Mr. Rogers brought it, and Nelly turned to the places she wished him particularly to read, and feebly drew a line with her pencil along the margin to mark them. This required some time, and then she talked to him of God and

heaven, until she was too weak to talk any more.

Ruth came to see her in the afternoon and Nelly asked her to sing. Ruth sang all her favorite hymns, while Nelly lay quietly with her eyes closed. Hearing the bells ringing for evening service, she said, "Ruth, before you go, please sing the Evening Hymn."

The girl sang it very softly, and her voice trembled when she came to the last words.

"Ruth," said Nelly, when she had finished, "sing that verse over again."

Ruth paused. She knew why Nelly liked that verse, and she feared to trust herself to sing it again, but seeing Nelly's eyes fixed upon her, she made a great effort to steady her voice, and again she sang—

"Teach me to live, that I may dread
The grave as little as my bed;
Teach me to die that so I may
Rise glorious on the Judgment day."

Ruth felt a strong desire to be alone and cry, but bravely restrained her feelings and then knelt for a minute at the bedside as she uttered a simple childish prayer. She rose to go away, kissed Nelly affectionately, and promised to bring her some wild flowers the next day.

Nelly looked at her with eyes full of love and gratitude, and softly murmured, "Dear, dear Ruthie."

Just as the long night that followed was changing into day, the child awoke. She looked up into her father's face, and smiled faintly; then the weary eyelids drooped again. Her lips moved. Mr. Rogers bent down his head over her. He could just hear something about Jesus and the angels. His eyes were blinded with tears. When he looked again, the same sweet smile rested on the peaceful face, but the happy spirit was released from the frail little body. It had left the dark room and the crowded city, and was soaring up beyond the sky, to that city, "which hath no need of the sun."

Ruth Harrison was up at the first streak of dawn. She dressed herself quickly, then quietly left the house and hastened along through the deserted streets. They looked dismal in the cold grey light, but Ruth was thinking of the pleasure she would give Nelly in bringing her a nice bunch of fresh wild flowers.

She had been walking fast and now had reached the outskirts of the city where the streets were wider and more open. She passed pretty yards with flowers in front, and window boxes filled with beautiful plants. Ruth gave them many a wistful glance and sighed to think of the delight one of those beautiful flowers would give Nelly. She hastened on to where the flowers grew wild along the roadside. At last she reached a little green lane where primroses and violets grew in wild profusion along the fences.

Eagerly Ruth filled her hands, and then sat down to enjoy the sweetness of



an early spring morning. The birds were singing in the trees; the grass looked so green, the flowers so fresh, all wet with dew, that Ruth sighed to think that her home was in the city instead of the country. A distant clock was striking six, and reminded Ruth she had no time to linger, so she started off at a quick pace, until she reached the city. The streets were very different now from what they were before—the bustle and excitement of the day had begun.

Fresh and rosy with her early exercise, her hands filled with flowers, Ruth hastened on, penetrating deeper and deeper into the city, through narrow lanes and winding alleys. At last she reached the house where Nelly had made her home.

Ruth paused a moment at the door, wondering whether Nelly would be awake. Then she remembered the little girl had told her she always awoke at an early hour. The door was open, and Ruth went in. Mr. Rogers was sitting in

the room downstairs, his arms folded on the table, and his head buried in them. Ruth, not wanting to disturb him, passed on without asking any questions. Noiselessly she approached Nelly's door. The sun was shining brightly into the room, and Nelly's canary, rejoicing in the cheery sunbeams, was pouring forth its joyous song. Ruth stopped a moment at the open door to see if Nelly was sleeping—yes, she was, a sleep from which Ruth could not awaken her.

On the bed lay the small well known form, still and motionless. Ruth came quite close, and bent over it in silent awe; there was no breathing, all was still—quite still.

Mrs. Harrison, having found that Ruth had gone out early, guessed where she must be, and also guessing what she might find, she came to seek her. She soothed the poor girl, and then told her she must come away. Ruth scattered the flowers she had brought over the bed, and with a last, long, lingering look

at the little face, now angelic in its calm repose, she allowed herself to be drawn away.

Together the mother and daughter went over to old Micky to tell him his little friend had gone. The old man listened quietly, only saying, "Well—well, I thought this old man would have been taken first; but then she'd have grieved; but after all, I shall not be long following her to glory."

And so it was. Just two days later old Micky M'Guinness departed in peace, resigning his soul into the hands of its faith Creator and most merciful Saviour. The aged form was laid in its last resting place in the same churchyard with the little child, who had first awakened him to prepare for eternity, and his spirit joined hers in paradise.

May this story teach us a lesson. Do you not wish to go to heaven after you die? How was it that the old man and the little child had a good hope of being admitted into that holy place where

“there shall in no wise enter in any thing that defileth”? Because, as they trusted, their sins were washed away in the blood of Jesus. May Nelly’s prayer be yours, “Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.”

LITTLE DOT

CHAPTER 1

It was a bright morning in spring, and the cemetery on the outskirts of the town looked more peaceful, if possible, than it usually did. The dew was still on the grass, for it was not yet nine o'clock. The violets and snowdrops on little children's graves were peeping above the soil, and speaking of the resurrection. The robins were singing their sweetest songs on the top of mossy grave-stones—happy in the stillness of the place. And the sunbeams were busy everywhere sunning the flowers, lighting up the dewdrops, and making everything glad and pleasant. Some of them even found their way into the deep grave in which Solomon Whitaker, the old gravedigger, was working, and they made it a little less dismal, and not quite so dark.

Not that old Whitaker thought it either dismal or dark. He had been a

gravedigger nearly all his life, so he looked upon gravedigging as his vocation, and thought it, on the whole, more pleasant employment than that of most of his neighbors.

It was very quiet in the cemetery at all times, but especially in the early morning; and the old man was not a little startled by hearing a very small voice speaking to him from the top of the grave.

“What are you doing down there?” said the little voice.

The gravedigger looked up quickly, and there, above him, peeping cautiously into the grave, was a child in a clean white pinafore, her dark brown hair hanging over her shoulders.

“Whoever in the world are you?” was his first question.

His voice sounded very awful, coming as it did out of the deep grave, and the child ran away, and disappeared as suddenly as she had come.

Solomon looked up several times af-

terward as he threw up fresh spadefuls of earth, but for some time he saw no more of his little visitor. But she was not far away; she was hiding behind a high tombstone, and in a few minutes she took courage and went again to the top of the grave. This time she did not speak, but stood with her finger in her mouth, looking shyly down upon him, as her long brown hair blew wildly about in the breeze.

Solomon thought he had never seen such a pretty little thing. He had had a little girl once, and though she had been dead more than thirty years, he had not quite forgotten her.

“What do they call you, my little dear?” said he, as gently as his husky old voice would let him say it.

“Dot,” said the child, nodding her head at him from the top of the grave.

“That’s a very funny name,” said Solomon. “I don’t think that I’ve ever heard it before.”

“Dot isn’t my real name; they call me

Ruth in my father's big Bible on our parlor table."

"That's got nothing to do with Dot as I can see," said the gravedigger.

"No," she said, shaking her long brown hair out of her eyes; "it's 'cause I'm such a little dot of a thing that they call me Dot."

"Oh, that's it, is it?" said Solomon, and then he went into a deep meditation on names, and called to mind some strange ones which he had read on the old churchyard gravestones.

When Solomon was in one of his "reveries," as his wife used to call them when she was alive, he seldom took much notice of what was going on around him, and he had almost forgotten the little girl, when she said suddenly, in a half-frightened voice, "I wonder what they call you?"

"Solomon," said the gravedigger. "Mr. Solomon Whitaker—that's my name."

"Then please, Mr. Solemn, what are you doing down there?"

"I'm digging a grave," said Solomon.

"What's it for, please, Mr. Solemn?" asked the child.

"Why, to bury folks in, of course," said the old man.

Little Dot retreated several steps when she heard this, as if she were afraid Mr. Solomon might want to bury her. When he looked up again there was only a corner of her white pinafore in sight. But as he went on quietly with his work, and took no notice of her, Dot thought she might venture near again, for she wanted to ask Mr. Solomon another question.

"Please," she began, "who are you going to put in that hole?"

"It's a man who fell down dead last week. He was a hard-working fellow, that he was," said the gravedigger. Mr. Solomon always liked to give people a good word when digging their graves.

Dot now seemed satisfied and, dropping down on her knees, told the old man that she had come to live in one of

the small cottages near the cemetery gates, and that they used to be ever so far off in the country.

Then she ran away to another part of the cemetery, and old Solomon shaded his eyes with his hand to watch her as she went out of sight.

CHAPTER 2

Dot's mother had lived all her life in a remote part, far away from church or chapel or any kind of school. But her husband had been born and brought up in a town, and country life did not suit him. And so, when Dot was about five years old, he returned to his native place, and took one of the cottages close to the cemetery, in order that his little girl might still have some green grass on which to run about, and might still see a few spring flowers.

The cemetery was some way out of the town; and Dot's mother, having had but little education herself, did not think it at all necessary that Dot, at her tender age, should go to school. Therefore the little girl was allowed to spend most of her time in the cemetery, which pleased her very well. She liked to run around the gravestones, and climb over the grassy mounds, and watch the robins hopping from tree to tree.

But Dot's favorite place was by old Solomon's side. She went about with him from one part of the cemetery to another, and he liked to feel her tiny hand in his. She took a great interest, too, in the graves he was digging. She watched him shaping them neatly and making them tidy, as he called it, until she began, as she fancied, to understand gravedigging nearly as well as he did. But she sometimes puzzled the old man by her questions, for Dot always wanted to know everything about what she saw.

"Mr. Solemn," she said, one day, "Shall you make me a little grave when I die?"

"Yes," he said, "I suppose I shall, little woman."

Dot thought this over for a long time. "I don't want to go into a grave," she said; "it doesn't look nice."

"No," said the gravedigger, "you needn't be frightened; you won't have to go just yet. Why, you're ever such a little mite of a thing!"

“Please, Mr. Solemn, when you die, who’ll have to dig your grave, please?”

“I don’t know,” said Solomon, uneasily; “they’ll have to get a new digger, I suppose.”

“Maybe you’d better dig one when you’ve a bit of time, Mr. Solemn.”

But though Solomon was very fond of digging other people’s graves—for he was so used to it that it had become quite a pleasure to him—he had no wish to dig his own. Nor did he like thinking about it, but Dot would not let him forget it.

Another day, when he was working in a distant part of the cemetery, she asked him, “Whereabouts will they bury you, Mr. Solemn?”

And when they were standing over a newly-made grave, and Solomon was admiring his work, she said, “I hope they will make your grave neat, Mr. Solemn.”

But though these questions and remarks made old Whitaker very uneasy—

for he had a sort of uncomfortable feeling in his heart when he thought of the day when his gravedigging would come to an end—still, for all that, he liked little Dot, and he would have missed the child much if anything had kept her from his side. She took such an interest in his graves, too, and watched them growing deeper and deeper with as much pleasure as he did himself. And, interest in our work generally wins our hearts. And by and by Dot found herself a way, as she thought, of helping old Solomon to make his graves look nice.

He was working one day at the bottom of a grave, and Dot was sitting on the grass at a little distance. He thought she was busy with her doll, for she had not been talking to him for a long time. He gave a jump, as he suddenly felt something patting on his head, and heard Dot's merry little laugh at the top of the grave. She had filled her pinafore with daisies, and thrown them upon him in the deep grave.



“Whatever in the world is that for?” said the old man, good-naturedly, as he shook the flowers off his head.

“It’s to make it pretty,” said Dot. “It’ll make it white and soft, you know, Mr. Solemn.”

Solomon submitted very patiently; and from that time the child always gathered daisies to scatter at the bottom of Solomon’s graves, till he began to look upon it as a necessary finish to his work. He often thought Dot was like a daisy herself, so fresh and bright she was; he wondered at himself when he reckoned how much he loved her. For his own little girl had been dead so many years; and it was so long now since he had dug his wife’s grave, that Solomon had almost forgotten how to love. He had had no one since to care for him, and he had cared for no one.

But little Dot had crept into his old heart unawares.

CHAPTER 3

Old Solomon was digging a grave one day in a very quiet corner of the cemetery. Dot was with him, as usual.

“It’s a tidy grave, this is,” remarked the old man as he smoothed the sides with his spade, “nice and dry, too; it’ll do me credit.”

“It’s a very little one,” said Dot.

“Yes; it has to be little when it’s for a little girl. You wouldn’t want a very big grave, Dot.”

“No,” said Dot; “but you would want a good big one, wouldn’t you, Mr. Solemn?” The mention of his own grave always made Solomon go into one of his “reveries.” But he was recalled by Dot’s asking quickly—“Mr. Solemn, is she a very little girl?”

“Yes,” said the old man, “maybe about your size, Dot. Her pa came about the grave. I was in the office when he called. He said, ‘I want a nice quiet little corner, for it is for my little girl.’ ”

“Did he look sorry?” said Dot.

“Yes,” he said. “Folks mostly do look sorry when they come about graves.”

Dot had never watched the digging of a grave with so much interest as she did that of this little girl. She never left Solomon’s side, not even to play with her doll. She was very quiet, too, as she stood with her large eyes wide open, watching all his movements. He wondered what had come over her, and he looked up several times rather anxiously as he threw up the spadefuls of earth.

“Mr. Solemn,” she said, when he had finished, “when will they put the little girl in?”

“Tomorrow morning,” said the old man, “sometime about eleven.”

Dot nodded her head, and made up her mind she would be in this corner of the cemetery at eleven o’clock.

When Solomon came back from his dinner and went to take a last look at the little grave, he found the bottom of it

covered with the white daisies which Dot had thrown in.

“She has made it pretty, bless her!” he murmured.

Dot crept behind the bushes near the chapel the next day to watch the little girl’s funeral. She saw the small coffin taken from the hearse. Then she watched the people. A lady and gentleman, whom she felt sure were the little girl’s father and mother, arrived first. The lady had her handkerchief to her eyes, and Dot could see that she was crying. After her walked two little girls, and they were crying also.

There were a few other people at the funeral, but Dot did not care to look at them; she wanted to see what became of the little girl’s coffin, which had just been carried into the chapel. She waited patiently till they brought it out, and then she followed the mournful procession at a little distance, till they reached the corner of the cemetery where Solomon had dug the grave.

Solomon was there, standing by the grave. Dot could see him quite well, and she could see the minister standing at the end of the grave, and all the people in a circle around it. She did not like to go very near, but she could hear the minister reading something in a very solemn voice, and then the coffin was let down into the grave. The little girl's mother cried very much, and Dot cried, too; she felt so sorry for her.

When the service was over, they all looked into the grave, and then they walked away. Dot ran up as soon as they were gone, and, taking hold of Solomon's hand, she peeped into the grave.

"Is the little girl inside there?" said Dot, in an awe-struck voice.

"Yes," said Solomon, "she's in there, poor thing; I'll have to fill it up now."

"Isn't it very dark?" said Dot.

"Isn't what dark?"

"In there," said Dot. "Isn't it very dark and cold for the poor little girl?"

"Oh, I don't know that," said Solomon.

“I don’t suppose folks feels cold when they are dead; anyhow, we must cover her up.” But poor Dot’s heart was very full, and, sitting on the grass beside the little girl’s grave, she began to cry and sob as if her heart would break.

“Don’t cry, Dot,” said the old man. “Maybe the little girl knows nothing about it—maybe she’s asleep like.”

But Dot’s tears only flowed the faster, for she felt sure that if the little girl were asleep, and knew nothing about it, as old Solomon said, she would be waking up some day, and then, how dreadful it would be for her.

“Come, Dot,” said Solomon, at last, “I must fill it up.”

Then Dot jumped up hastily. “Please, Mr. Solemn, wait one minute,” she cried, as she disappeared among the bushes.

“Whatever is she up to now?” said the old gravedigger.

She soon came back with her pinafore full of daisies. She had been gathering them all the morning and had

hidden them in a shady place under the trees. Then, with a little sob, she threw them into the deep grave and watched them fall on the little coffin. After this she watched Solomon finish his work and did not go home until the little girl's grave was made, as old Solomon said, "all right and comfortable."

CHAPTER 4

Dot took a very great interest in “her little girl’s grave,” as she called it. She was up early the next morning, and as soon as her mother had given her her breakfast, she ran to the quiet corner in the cemetery to look at the newly-made grave. It looked very bare Dot thought, and she ran away to gather a number of daisies to spread on the top of it. She covered it as well as she could with them, and she patted the sides of the grave with her little hands to make it more smooth and tidy. Dot wondered if the little girl knew what she was doing, and if it made her any happier to know there were daisies above her.

She thought she would ask Solomon; so when she had finished she went in search of him. He was not far away, and she begged him to come and look at what she had done to her little girl’s grave. He took hold of Dot’s hand, and she led him to the place.

“See, Mr. Solemn,” she said, “haven’t I made my little girl’s grave pretty?”

“Aye,” he answered, “you have found many daisies, Dot.”

“But, Mr. Solemn,” asked Dot, anxiously, “do you think she knows?”

“Why, Dot, I don’t know—maybe she does,” he said, for he did not like to disappoint her.

“Mr. Solemn, shall I put you some daisies at the top of your grave?” said Dot, as they walked away.

Solomon made no answer. Dot had reminded him so often of his own grave, that he had sometimes begun to think about it and to wonder how long it would be before it would have to be made. He had a vague idea that when he was buried he would not come to an end. He had heard of heaven and of hell; and though he had never thought much about either of them, he had a kind of feeling that some day he must go to one or the other. Hell, he had heard, was for bad people, and heaven for good ones;

and though Solomon tried to persuade himself that he belonged to the latter class, he could not quite come to that opinion. There was something in his heart which told him all was not right with him, and made the subject an unpleasant one. He wished Dot would let it drop and not talk to him about it any more; and then he went into a reverie about Dot, and Dot's daisies, and all her pretty ways.

It was the afternoon of the same day and Dot was sitting beside her little girl's grave, trying to make the daisies look more pretty by putting some leaves among them, when she heard footsteps crossing the broad gravel path. She jumped up and peeped behind the trees to see who was coming. It was the lady and gentleman whom she had seen at the funeral, and they were coming to look at their little girl's grave. Dot felt very shy, but she could not run away without meeting them, so she hid behind a hawthorn bush at the other side.

The little girl's father and mother came close to the grave, and Dot was so near that, as they knelt down beside it, she could hear a great deal of what they were saying. The lady was crying very much and for some time she did not speak. But the gentleman said, "I wonder who has put these flowers here, my dear? How very pretty they are!"

"Yes," said the lady through her tears, "and the grave was full of them yesterday."

"How pleased our little girl would have been!" said he. "She was so fond of daisies! Who could have done it?"

Little Dot heard all this from her hiding place, and she felt very pleased that she had made her little girl's grave so pretty.

The lady cried a great deal as she sat by the grave. But just before they left, Dot heard the gentleman say, "Don't cry, dearest; remember what our little Lilian said the night before she died."

"Yes," said the lady, "I will never

forget." And she dried her eyes, and Dot thought she tried to smile as she looked up at the blue sky. Then she took a bunch of white violets which she had brought with her and put them in the middle of the grave, but she did not move any of Dot's daisies, at which she looked very lovingly and tenderly.

As soon as they were gone, Dot came out from behind the hawthorn bush. She went up to her little girl's grave, and kneeling on the grass beside it she smelled the white violets and stroked them with her tiny hand. They made it look so much nicer, she thought; but she felt very glad that the lady had liked her daisies. She would gather some fresh ones tomorrow.

Dot walked home very slowly. She had so much to think over. She knew her little girl's name now, and that she was fond of daisies. She would not forget that. Dot felt very sorry for the poor lady; she wished she could tell her so. And then she began to wonder what

it was that her little girl had said the night before she died. It must be something nice, Dot thought, to make the lady wipe her eyes and try to smile. Perhaps the little girl had said she did not mind being put into the dark hole.

Dot thought it could hardly be that, for she felt sure she would mind it very much indeed. Dot was sure she would be very frightened if she had to die and old Solomon had to dig a grave for her. No, it could not be that which Lilian had said. Perhaps Solomon was right and the little girl was asleep. If so, Dot hoped it would be a long, long time before she woke up again.

Solomon had left his work, or Dot would have told him about what she had seen. But it was getting late and she must go home. Her mother was standing at the door looking out for her, and she called to the child to be quick and come in to supper.

Dot found her father at home, and they began their meal. But little Dot was

so quiet, and sat so still, that her father asked her what was the matter. Then she thought she would ask him what she wanted to know, for he was very kind to her and generally tried to answer her questions.

So Dot told him about her little girl's grave, and what the lady and gentleman had talked about, and she asked what he thought the little girl had said that had made her mother stop crying.

But Dot's father could not tell her. And when Dot said she was sure she would not like to be put in a hole like that, her father only laughed and told her not to trouble her little head about it; she was too young to think of such things.

"But my little girl was only just about as big as me," said Dot, " 'cause Mr. Solemn told me so."

This was an argument which her father could not answer, so he told Dot to eat her supper and get to bed. And when she was asleep he said to his wife

that he did not think the cemetery was a good place for his little girl to play in—it made her gloomy. But Dot's mother said it was better than the street, and Dot was too light-hearted to be dull long.

And while they were talking, little Dot was dreaming of Lilian and of what she had said the night before she died.

CHAPTER 5

A day or two after, as Dot was putting fresh daisies on the little grave, she felt a hand on her shoulder, and looking up she saw her little girl's mother. She had come up very quietly, and Dot was so intent on what she was doing that she had not heard her. It was too late to run away; but the lady's face was so kind and loving that the child could not be afraid. She took hold of Dot's little hand and sat down beside her, and then she said very gently, "Is this the little girl who gathered the daisies?"

"Yes," said Dot shyly, "it was me."

The lady seemed very pleased, and she asked Dot what her name was and where she lived. Then she said, "Dot, what was it that made you bring these pretty flowers here?"

"Please," said the child, "it was 'cause Mr. Solemn said she was ever such a little girl—maybe about as big as me."

"Who is Mr. Solemn?" asked the lady.

“It’s an old man—he digs the graves; he made my little girl’s grave,” said Dot.

The tears came into the lady’s eyes, and she stooped down and kissed the child.

Dot was beginning to feel quite at home with her little girl’s mother, and she stroked the lady’s soft glove with her tiny hand.

They sat quietly still for some time. Dot never moved, and the lady had almost forgotten her—she was thinking of her own little girl. The tears began to run down her cheeks, though she tried to keep them back, and some of them fell upon Dot as she sat at her feet.

“I was thinking of my little girl,” said the lady, as Dot looked sorrowfully up into her face.

“Please,” said Dot, “I wonder what your little girl said to you the night before she died?” She thought perhaps it might comfort the lady to think of it, as it had done so the other day.

The lady looked very surprised when

Dot said this, as she had had no idea that the little girl was near when she was talking to her husband.

“How did you know, Dot?” she asked.

“Please, I couldn’t help it,” said little Dot. “I was putting the daisies—”

“Yes?” said the lady, and she waited for the child to go on.

“And I ran in there,” said Dot, nodding at the hawthorn bush. “I heard you—and please, don’t be angry.”

“I’m not angry,” said the lady.

Dot looked into her face, and saw she was gazing at her with a very sweet smile.

“Then please,” said little Dot, “I would like very much to know what the little girl said.”

“I will tell you, Dot,” said the lady, “Come and sit on my knee.”

There was a flat tombstone close by, on which they sat while the little girl’s mother talked to Dot. She found it very hard to speak about her child, it was so short a time since she had died. But she

tried her very best, for the sake of the little girl who had covered the grave with daisies.

“Lilian was ill only a very short time,” said the lady. “A week before she died she was running about and playing—just as you have been doing today, Dot. But she took a bad cold, and soon she died.”

“Oh!” said Dot, with a little sob, “I am so sorry for the poor little girl!”

“Lilian wasn’t afraid to die, Dot,” said the lady.

“Wasn’t she?” said Dot. “I should be frightened ever so much—but maybe she’d never seen Mr. Solemn bury anybody; maybe she didn’t know she had to go into that dark hole.”

“Listen, Dot,” said the lady, “and I will tell you what my little girl said the night before she died. ‘Mama,’ she said, ‘don’t let Violet and Ethel think that I’m down deep in the cemetery, but take them out and show them the blue sky and all the white clouds, and tell them that little

sister Lilian's up there with Jesus.' Violet and Ethel are my other little girls, Dot."

"Yes," said Dot, in a whisper; "I saw them at the funeral."

"That is what my little girl said, and that made me stop crying the other day."

Dot looked very puzzled. There was a great deal that she wanted to think over and to ask Solomon about.

The lady was obliged to go home, for it was getting late. She kissed the child before she went and said she hoped Dot would see her little girl one day, above the blue sky.

Dot could not make out what the lady meant, nor what her little girl had meant the night before she died. She wanted very much to hear more about her, and she hoped the lady would soon come again.

"Mr. Solemn," said Dot the next day, as she was in her usual place on the top of one of Solomon's graves, "didn't you

say that my little girl was in that long box?"

"Yes," said Solomon. "Yes, Dot, I said so, I believe."

"But my little girl's mama says she isn't in there, Mr. Solemn, and my little girl said so the night before she died."

"Where is she then?" asked Solomon.

"She's somewhere up there," said Dot, pointing with her finger to the blue sky.

"Oh, in heaven," said Solomon. "Yes, Dot, I suppose she is in heaven."

"How did she get there?" asked Dot, "I want to know all about it, Mr. Solemn."

"Oh, I don't know," said the old man; "good folks always go to heaven."

"Will you go to heaven, Mr. Solemn, when you die?"

"I hope I shall, Dot," said the old man. "But there, run away a little; I want to tidy round a bit."

Now Solomon had very often "tidied round," as he called it, without sending little Dot away; but he did not want her

to ask him any more questions, and he hoped she would forget it before she came back.

But Dot had not forgotten. She had not even been playing; she had been sitting on an old tombstone, thinking about what Solomon had said. And as soon as he had finished, she ran up to him.

“Mr. Solemn,” she said, “did she get out in the night?”

“Who get out?” said the old man in a very puzzled voice.

“My little girl, Mr. Solemn. Did she get out that night after you covered her up?”

“No,” said Solomon, “she couldn’t get out; how could she?”

“Then she’s in there yet,” said little Dot, very sorrowfully.

“Yes, the last home of man is the grave, Dot.”

“But, Mr. Solemn, you said she was in heaven,” Dot went on in a very mournful little voice.

Solomon did not know how to answer her; indeed it was very puzzling to himself. He wished he could think of what to say to Dot, but nothing would come to him, so he gave up the attempt.

But Dot's busy little mind was not satisfied. The little girl's mother must be right; and she had said she hoped Dot would see Lilian above the blue sky. Dot wondered how she would get up above the sky.

"Mr. Solemn," she said one day, "don't you wish you were just like a bird?"

"No," said the old man, "I'd rather be digging graves."

"But, Mr. Solemn, they've got two wings," she went on.

"And what would you do with two wings, my little dear?" asked the gravedigger.

"I'd go right up into the sky and look for my little girl," said Dot.

"Oh!" said Solomon, "your thoughts are always running on that, Dot. How's dolly today?"

But Dot had left her dolly at home—
she had almost forgotten it the last day
or two.



CHAPTER 6

The next week was very wet, and Dot's mother would not let her go into the cemetery. So she sat at home by the fire with her doll upon her knee, wondering what her little girl was doing and whether she was really in the sky. Then she listened to the rain pattering against the windowpanes and thought how the little grave would be and how bare it must look, now that there were no daisies upon it. Dot hoped very, very much that her little girl was not inside.

Every time that Solomon passed to and from his work, Dot was at the window to nod to him. He missed her very much this rainy weather; but he had to go on with his work in the cold and damp, just as usual. It was a great cheer to the old man to see the little face at the window, morning and evening—and sometimes Dot's mother was there too. Dot would pull her by the apron when she saw her old friend coming.

“Mother,” she would say, “here’s my Mr. Solemn!” and then her mother would run with her to the window to see the old gravedigger pass.

But as soon as the sunshine came and the grass began to dry, Dot was by Solomon’s side again. She walked with him to the cemetery, though as soon as they reached the gates she ran quickly forward to look at her little girl’s grave. But when she got to the place, she stood still in amazement. It looked quite different from what it did when she was there last. The sides of the grave were covered with nice soft grass which looked green and fresh after the rain. Then the top of the grave was quite flat and smooth like a flower bed, and in the middle of it was a small rosebush.

Dot ran around the grave several times to look at all these changes. Then she sat beside it and patted the grass and admired the rosebush.

After a time she went to look for Solomon to tell him what she had found.



“Oh, Mr. Solemn!” she cried, “my little girl’s grave is ever so pretty!”

“Yes,” he said, “I know it is, Dot; a man came and did it a week ago—I think it was the lady’s gardener. I thought I wouldn’t tell you, my little dear—you’d be more surprised like.”

“Oh, Mr. Solemn, did you see the rosebush!”

“Yes, I saw it, Dot.”

“Mr. Solemn, I know what I’ll do, I’ll put you a rosebush on your grave when you die—a real nice one.”

The old man took her up in his arms and kissed her, and then he went on with his usual work.

It was a bright summer’s morning not long after, when Dot saw the two little girls who had walked behind the lady and gentleman at the funeral, coming in at the cemetery gates. The older of them had a green watering can in her hand, and her sister had a small covered basket. Dot followed them at a little distance and watched them going to the

quiet corner of the cemetery.

But before they went in among the trees they turned around and caught sight of Dot. Their mother had told them to look out for her, so they came back to meet her.

“Are you Dot?” asked the elder sister.

“Yes,” said Dot shyly.

“Mama told us about you,” said Violet.

“And she thought you would help us,” Ethel went on. “We’re going to sow some seeds on Lilian’s grave aren’t we, Violet?”

“Yes,” said Violet, “our gardener wanted to do it, but Papa says we could do it if we wanted to. Come, Dot, you may walk with us.”

So the three children went hand in hand to the little grave.

It was a long business sowing the seeds, but when they were put safely in the ground, and Dot had given the earth a last pat with her hand, Violet said they must be watered.

“Dot,” she said, “where can we get some water?”

Dot ran with the green watering can to the pump near the cemetery gates and soon returned with the water, with which Violet carefully watered the earth where the seeds had been planted.

“They ought to be watered every day,” she said. “Our gardener always waters his seeds every day; they won’t spring up if they haven’t enough water, will they, Ethel? What shall we do about it?”

“Please, I’ll water them,” said little Dot.

“Oh! will you?” asked Violet. “That will be a very good plan, won’t it, Ethel?”

“Yes,” said her sister, “and we can leave Dot the small can.”

“But you must hold it up as high as you can, Dot,” said Violet, “and do it very gently, or you will wash the seeds out of the ground. Do you think you can manage?”

“Yes,” said Dot, gravely, as though impressed with the greatness of her

trust. "Will the little girl like them?" she asked as they walked away.

"What little girl?" asked Ethel.

"Your little girl," said Dot, nodding in the direction of the grave.

"Who, Lilian?" asked Ethel. "Yes, I'm sure she will like them if she knows. But then, you see, I'm not quite sure if she does."

"Perhaps Jesus will let her fly down and look at them," said Violet.

"Oh! I don't think she would want to come, Violet," said her sister. "She would have so many pretty flowers to look at up there."

"Then she is in the sky?" asked Dot, standing quite still and fixing her eyes earnestly on the two little girls.

"Yes," said Violet, in a shocked voice, "didn't you know that, Dot? But you're such a tiny little thing—isn't she, Ethel?"

"But please," said Dot, eagerly, "I saw Mr. Solemn put her in, right down among my daisies in a white box, and please, I would so like to know how she got out."

“She didn’t get out,” said Ethel.

“Because she never went in,” Violet went on. “She told Mama so, you know, before she died.”

“Then please,” said Dot, “wasn’t she in the little box?”

“Yes, she was—at least—no, she wasn’t. I wish Mama was here,” said Ethel, “she could tell you how it was. That was her body, you know, in there—her soul was in the sky.”

“I don’t quite see,” said Dot, being puzzled.

“Why this is your body, Dot,” said Violet, taking hold of Dot’s arm and giving it a little pat.

“But, please, that’s my arm,” said little Dot in a very bewildered voice.

“Yes,” explained Ethel, “but all this is your body, Dot—all over you—your soul’s inside somewhere, where you can’t see it.”

“I should like to see my soul,” said little Dot.

“Oh, but you never could,” said Vio-

let. "Could she, Ethel?"

"No, I think not," said Ethel. "Perhaps when we get to heaven we shall."

CHAPTER 7

As soon as the two girls were gone, Dot hastened in search of Mr. Solomon. She found him walking home to his dinner, his spade over his shoulder. Slipping her hand into his, she walked beside him and told him her morning's adventures.

"Please, Mr. Solemn," she said, "have you got a soul?"

"Why, yes," said Solomon, "everybody's got one—to be sure they have."

"Then they'll only put your body in the ground, Mr. Solemn? I'm so glad—that won't matter so very much will it?"

Solomon made no answer, so Dot went on, "Would you like your soul to go to heaven, Mr. Solemn?"

"Yes, child," said the old man; "heaven is a good place, so they say."

"Will you dig graves in heaven, Mr. Solemn?"

"No," said the old man, with a laugh.

“There are no graves in heaven. There is ‘no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying.’ ”

Solomon had learned this verse at his mother’s knee, years ago, and it came back to him with a strange freshness which almost startled him.

Dot looked up into his face, as she said, brightly, “What a very nice place heaven must be! But what will you do there, Mr. Solemn, if you don’t dig graves?”

“Why sing, I suppose, Dot—sing hymns and such like.”

“I didn’t know you could sing, Mr. Solemn,” said Dot, with a laugh. “You’ve got such an old voice; it all shakes about; but you and me must help each other; that’ll do—won’t it?”

Never were plants more diligently watered than those on Lilian’s grave; and great was Dot’s delight as she saw the little green shoots coming, one by one, out of the ground.

But what was her surprise one morn-

ing, on going to the grave, to find two men in her quiet corner. They were very busy, for they had brought with them a small white marble stone for the little girl's grave. Dot watched their every movement with the deepest interest, and when they were gone she examined the stone very carefully, though she could not read a word of what was on it. But old Solomon put on his spectacles and made it out for her.

“ ‘Lilian Stanley,’ ” he began—

“That's my little girl's name,” said Dot.

“ ‘Age 6 years.’ ”

“Is that all?” asked little Dot.

“No, wait a minute,” said the old man; “and I'll tell you it all—here's some reading at the bottom: ‘White in the blood of the Lamb.’ That's all, Dot.”

“What Lamb, Mr. Solemn?”

“Oh, I don't know Dot; that's a text; it's in the Bible somewhere.”

“I want to know all about it,” said Dot.

“Can't you tell me, Mr. Solemn?”

But just then they heard a voice behind them, saying "Oh! that looks very well. I am so glad it is done!" Looking up, they saw the little girl's father, with Violet holding his hand.

Solomon touched his hat respectfully and moved away; but Dot stayed behind, for she wanted to hear about the text on the little girl's grave.

" 'White in the blood of the Lamb,' " read Mr. Stanley aloud.

"What Lamb?" asked little Dot, simply.

"The dear Lord Jesus," said the gentleman. "My little girl would never have gotten to heaven if He had not washed her in His blood. And now Lilian wears a white robe, made white in the blood of the Lamb. Yes, my children," he went on, "there is no other way to the bright land above the sky; there is no other way to get rid of your sins—and no sin can enter into heaven. But Jesus has loved you and shed His blood for you, and He can wash you whiter than snow."

“Will He wash me?” asked little Dot.

“I am sure He will, my child, if you ask Him,” said the gentleman.

Then he took the two little girls to a seat by the gravel path not far away, and he taught them this short prayer: “Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” And that prayer was treasured up in little Dot’s heart.

Over and over she repeated it as she walked home, and she said it many times during the day. When Dot’s mother came to look at her child in bed, little Dot turned over in her sleep, and her mother heard the words again, “Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.”

CHAPTER 8

The autumn came on very early that year. There were cold east winds which swept among the trees of the cemetery and scattered their leaves on the ground. Then there were thick mists and drizzling rains, and each morning and evening the dew fell heavily on the grass. And now and then there was a slight frost which nipped the geraniums and the fuchsias and all the flowers which had been so bright through the summer.

It grew very damp and chilly in the cemetery, but Dot was still in her place at Solomon's side. She was very pale and thin, he thought; and he fancied she shivered sometimes as she stood on the damp grass. He would wrap her up in his old overcoat very tenderly as she sat on the cold stone near him, and he would tell her to run about to warm herself many times in the day.

But Dot was not so fond of running

about as she used to be. She had been very tired lately, and she would soon come back to him, and stand beside him at his work, talking to him in her pretty childish way. He liked to hear her talk, and it was never dull when she was with him. She had taught him her little prayer, and old Solomon could say it as well as she could. As for Dot, it was seldom out of her thoughts, and Solomon often found her kneeling among the trees of the cemetery, "asking the Lord Jesus," as she called praying.

But Dot's mother often sent for her to come in, for she noticed that her child was not well. She had a tiresome little cough which often kept her awake by night, and distressed old Solomon by day. He walked into the town, poor old man, to buy her some cough drops, which he heard had helped a neighbor of his. He thought they might make his little dear's cold well. But Dot's cough still continued, and grew worse instead of better. So Dot's mother kept her at

home, and she could only wave and throw kisses to Solomon as he passed the window to his work. He came to see her in the evenings, for she fretted so much for him that her mother invited him to come as often as he could.

“Mr. Solemn,” she said one day, “I know all about it now.”

“About what, my dear?” asked the old man.

“About my little girl, and heaven, and Jesus, Mr. Solemn. Has He washed you, Mr. Solemn?”

“I don’t know, my dear,” he replied.

“ ‘Cause you can’t go to heaven if He doesn’t, Mr. Solemn.”

“No, I suppose not,” said the old man. “There’s many things in me that ought to be different—I know that, Dot.”

“You will say my little prayer, won’t you, Mr. Solemn?” asked Dot.

“Yes, Dot, I will,” said the old man, “God help me, I will.”

This little child was teaching him many lessons; and now that he saw her

slipping away from his sight, each day growing more thin and pale, he felt as if his heart would break.

Violet and Ethel, and their father and mother often came to see Dot and brought her tempting things to eat and drink.

Dot was always very pleased to see them and for hours would look out of the window for their coming.

But the flower was fading very quickly. Dot was taken suddenly worse, and even her mother knew that her little girl would not be long with her. She was very tender to Dot now. She would hold her little girl in her arms for hours at a time, for Dot was very weary and liked to lie quite still with her head on her mother's shoulder. And, at length, there came a long sorrowful day, when Dot's father stayed away from work, and Dot's mother sat all day beside the little bed which they had brought down for the child to lie upon.

It was evening and little Dot was

sinking fast. She had scarcely spoken all day, except to murmur her little prayer; but now old Solomon had come in, after his day's work, and was sitting beside her, holding her tiny hand in his.

She opened her eyes and smiled at him.

"Mr. Solemn," she asked, "have you said it?"

"Said what, my dear?" asked the old man.

"My little prayer, Mr. Solemn."

"Yes, my dear. Yes, Dot, I've said it many a time, and I do believe the Lord's heard me and done it for me; I do believe He has."

"I'm so glad," said little Dot, smiling as she said it.

He stayed with her until it was quite late, and when he was coming away she said wearily, "I'm so tired, Mr. Solemn."

"Are you, my dear?" said the old man.

"Please, Mr. Solemn, say my little prayer for me tonight."

Solomon knelt down by the side of

the bed. Dot's father and mother knelt beside him, and little Dot clasped her hands and shut her eyes, while the old man prayed in a trembling voice.

Then he kissed Dot and came away with a troubled heart.

The next morning, as he went to his work, he heard that his little girl was gone. "What! my little darling," said the old man, "my little darling gone!"

CHAPTER 9

There was a little grave to be dug that day, and it was the hardest task old Solomon ever had. The earth seemed to him as heavy as lead that morning, and many a time he stopped and moaned as if he could work no more. He sometimes looked up, as if he half expected to see his little Dot standing at the top of the grave. He almost thought he heard her merry laugh, and her dear little voice saying, "Won't you say my little prayer, Mr. Solemn?"

But this was his little Dot's grave, and she was gone. It could not be true; oh, it could not be true!

But as the old man toiled on, a happier thought stole into his old heart, and he thought he saw his little Dot, dressed in white and walking with the angels near the Lord, in the home above the blue sky. And it did old Solomon good to think of this.

The grave was close to Lilian's; side

by side they were to lie, for so Lilian's father had ordered it. He loved little Dot for the care she had taken of his child's grave.

It was the day of the funeral—little Dot's funeral. Old Solomon was wandering among the trees of the cemetery, every now and then stooping wearily to gather something from the ground. He was getting daisies to put in his little dear's grave. They were very scarce now, and it gave him much trouble to collect them, and they looked very poor and frostbitten when he put them together, but they were the best he could find, and, with trembling hands, he threw them into the little grave.

It was a very quiet funeral. The gentleman and lady and their two little girls came to it, and Dot's father and mother, and old Solomon did his sorrowful part. And they looked down into the grave at the little coffin lying among the daisies. Then all was over, and the robin sang his song on little Dot's grave.

Lilian's father ordered a stone exactly like that which had been put on his own child's grave—a small white marble stone; and on the stone were these words:

LITTLE DOT

and underneath was Dot's text:

**“WASH ME, AND I SHALL BE
WHITER THAN SNOW.”**

Old Solomon toiled on, often lonely and sad. The neighbors said he was getting childish, for he often fancied that his little Dot was still alive, and he would look up from the graves and smile at her as he used to do when she stood at the top. And he often thought he heard her little voice whispering among the trees of the cemetery. And the words she whispered were always those of her little prayer.

So Solomon grew to think of her as alive and not dead, and it comforted his old heart. “For,” said he, “it will not be very long before I shall see her again.”

