

LITTLE HELEN;

Mary C. OR *Bruce*

A DAY IN THE LIFE

OF

A NAUGHTY GIRL



NEW HAVEN.

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LITTLE HELEN.

"I don't like to get up yet," said Helen Vernon, to her maid, Ann Shirley, who came to call her. "It is too early, and I'm very sleepy; why did you wake me?"

"It is time to rise, Miss Helen," replied Ann. "Your mamma and papa are both getting up."

"I can't get up yet," said the silly girl.

"Then I must leave you," said Ann, as she went towards the door.

"No, you must not leave me, cried Helen.

"I don't like to be left."

"Will you get up then, Miss?" asked Ann.

"Yes, if you'll lift me out of bed, and put on my clothes, and wash me, and brush my hair," said Helen.

"Your mamma says you must learn to wait upon yourself," answered Ann.

"But it's too much trouble to wait upon myself," replied Helen; "so, Ann, you *must* dress me."

"O, Miss Helen! *must* is not a word for you to use; pray get up, and I will help you to dress, for I should be quite sorry if your mamma were to find you in bed when she comes up stairs."

Helen finally got out of bed, and put on her socks, and tied her shoes. When she



was ready to wash, she put her hand into the basin, but soon drew it back again, saying, "Oh! the water is cold; I must have some warm water to wash me with."

"No, Miss Helen," said Ann; "you know you must not have warm water. Your mamma wishes you to use cold water, because it is more healthy. Come, don't be afraid of a little water; it will make your cheeks glow, and when your papa sees you, he will say, Come, Helen, let me kiss that rosy cheek."

After a great deal of trouble, Helen was washed and dressed, just as her papa looked in at the door to see what kept her so late. When Ann had combed her hair, she went down to breakfast. Her papa and mamma had finished theirs, and Helen was obliged to eat hers alone. Sitting down, in a very ill humor, to her bowl of bread and milk, she said to Ann, "Give me some cold milk; this is so hot it burns my mouth."

"That is not the way to ask for what you want, Miss Helen," said Ann; "I shall not give it you till you speak as you should do."

"I shall reach it for myself, then," said Helen; and as she spoke, she stood upon the chair and stretched out her arm to reach the milk. As she drew back her arm, her foot slipped and down she fell, pulling the table over, and scalding her arm with the milk.

At this moment her papa came into the room, and Helen, looking down at the table,



and at her broken doli, which she had just before laid upon it, and then looking up in her papa's face, burst into tears.

"What is the cause of all this, and of your tears, Helen?" asked Mr. Vernon.

"Papa," sobbed Helen, "I tried to reach the milk, and slipped off the chair, and pulled over the table, and hurt my arm. I asked Ann for the milk, but she would not hand it to me."

"Had not Ann some good reason for not doing so?" asked her papa.

"I did not ask her for it in a proper way," said Helen.

"You see, Helen," said her papa, "how much evil one fault may cause. You did not ask in the right manner for what you wanted; you tried to help yourself, and in so doing, have thrown down the table, broken the bowl, wasted the bread and milk, scalded your arm, and spoiled your clothes. I hope the pain you now feel will be a warning to you. As you have wasted so much good food, you must be content with a piece of dry bread and a little milk and water for your breakfast." So saying, Mr. Vernon left the room.

It was some time before Helen could make up her mind to eat the dry bread; but she at length became so hungry that she was glad to do so; especially as her mamma had now come into the room, and was asking Ann what had been the matter with Helen. Mrs.

Vernon looked very sorrowful at her little girl, when she heard the story, and she talked with her a long time about the folly and wickedness of her conduct.

When her mamma left her, Helen went into the parlor; but her papa looked grave, and did not welcome her as kindly as usual. All this vexed her, for she had yet to learn, that goodness only can make little girls happy. She now felt cross and angry because she was not happy, and thus became still more naughty.

"It is a fine frosty day," said Mr. Vernon, "and you had better take a run in the garden. The sun is bright, although the air is cold, and if you run as fast as you can, you will be able to keep yourself quite warm."

"Papa," said Helen, "I can't run in cold weather, and I don't wish to go out. Why must I go out when I don't like it?"

"First of all, Helen, because it is your duty to obey me; and next, because it is good for your health. So go at once, and the more cheerful you are, the more happy you will be."

Helen went into the hall, leaving the parlor door open, and called from the bottom of the stairs to Ann, in a loud cross tone, to bring down her bonnet and shawl.

"Come back, Helen, and shut the door," said her papa, "and then go up stairs and fetch your things yourself."

Helen knew she must obey her papa, and she did as he told her, but with a very bad grace. She gave Ann a great deal of trouble in dressing her, for she would neither stand still nor turn round. At last she was dressed and went out, but in a very bad humor. Instead of running, she stood still, or walked as slow as she could, saying to herself, "Oh, it is so cold! I wish I was by the fire-side." But she was cross, and would not try to keep herself warm. At length she really did feel cold, and began to cry, when she saw her mamma coming towards her.

"Why, Helen," said she, "what is the matter? Are you cold? Come, let us try what a run will do. Which will get to the apple-tree first, you or I?"

But Helen, having made up her mind not to run, did not like to start.

"Well," said Mrs. Vernon, "then I must help you. I suppose you have stood still till you can scarcely move."

Accordingly, she half led, half pulled the reluctant little girl as far as the apple-tree, and back again. Her kindness and good humor won upon Helen by degrees, and in a little time she felt warmer and more happy.

"I think you are not cross and cold now, Helen," said Mrs. Vernon.

"No, mamma, not at all," replied Helen.

"You had only to run about, in order to get rid of these feelings. Our own bad tem-



pers are worse than cold or hunger; they lead us into much evil, and make us sad when we might be happy. Look around you, my dear; what a bright clear sky, and how warmly you are clothed; there is nothing here to vex or annoy you, and yet, in spite of all your comforts, you are cross and unhappy a greater part of the time."

"But, mamma," said Helen, "I do not know what to do, for the naughty feelings come and drive away the good ones."

"But, Helen, if you were now to see a pond of water before you, you would not walk into it; and if you were to see a gnat about to sting you, you would drive it away. So, when you are about to do what is wrong, *think*, and avoid it as you would the pond; and when you are going to cry or fret, and be cross, *think*, and drive away the cross feelings and tears, as you would the gnat; for these tears and bad thoughts will give you more pain than a great many stings."

"Well, mamma," said Helen, "I will try."

As soon as they had reached home, Helen went to her papa, and with a smile on her face, told him she was a good girl. He kissed her and said he was very glad to hear it, and he hoped she would always be a good girl.

Helen went on very well, and kept her word for two or three hours; at the end of which time, she came down into the parlor,



where she found a gentleman and two ladies, with a little child, who were to dine with her papa and mamma.

Helen had eaten her dinner a short time before; and when the party were about to go into the dining-room, her mamma called Ann to take care of Miss Helen until the dessert was served.

"Mamma, I'm hungry," said Helen.

"Not very, I think, Helen," said her mother. "It is not long since you dined."

"But I should like to dine with you."

"No, Helen," said Mrs. Vernon; "two dinners would not agree with you."

"Pray do, mamma, let me dine with you," said Helen; "I should like it so very much."

"No, Helen," replied her mother; "I have said *no*, and I mean *no*."

"Pray, mamma," Helen again began.

"Ann," said Mrs. Vernon to the servant, "take Miss Helen out of the room; I am sorry she does not behave herself well enough to remain here."

Helen began to cry; and as she was led up stairs, she screamed so loud, that her mamma left her friends, and taking Helen by the hand, she put her in a closet by herself, where her screams could not be heard.

"You are fit only to be alone," said Mrs. Vernon, "while you conduct yourself thus."

She then shut and locked the door, and went down stairs. Helen cried louder than



ever, kicked at the door, and called Ann and her mamma to let her out; but no one came near her. At length, tired of screaming, she sat down on a box, which stood on the floor of the closet. She then began to think of all her mamma had said to her, and how much she had lost by being naughty, and how little she had gained.

She was very sad and lonely; she had nothing to do, nothing to look at, and no one to talk or listen to; had she been a good child she would have amused herself till dinner was over; then she would have gone into the dining-room, and have eaten some fruit; she would have had the little girl who came with the ladies, to play with her; and, more than all, her papa and mamma, with their visitors, would have thought well of her; but now she was in disgrace with them all. The tears again rolled down her cheeks, but she did not scream or even sob; these tears were silent tears of grief, not tears of rage or anger. At length the closet door was opened by her mother, who said, "As you have done screaming, Helen, you may come out."

She then led her down into the parlor, and seating herself on the sofa, asked her,—
"Have you any thing to say to me before you go to bed?"

"I am very sorry, mamma," said Helen, "that I have been so naughty; I will try to be better."

"You told me so but a few hours ago; but you have not kept your word, and I cannot therefore trust you."

"I don't know what to say, mamma; I wish to be good, and I think I shall grow good now; for I have been more unhappy than I ever was before."

"I do hope," said Mrs. Vernon, "that you will hereafter try to be good, for I believe you are now heartily sorry. Go to bed now, and before you sleep, think how you may best learn to obey me, and to keep your temper." She then kissed Helen; but her face was grave, and she looked very sad indeed.

Helen went to bed, and when she laid her head down on her pillow, she said, "Indeed I am not happy, for I have not been good, and this has been a very

UNPLEASANT DAY."