

THE TWO PLUMS.

"WHAT are you looking for, Rosamond?" said her mother.

Rosamond was kneeling upon the carpet, and leaning upon both her hands, looking very earnestly for something.

"Mamma," said she, pushing aside her hair which hung over her face, and looking up, with a sorrowful countenance, "I am looking for my needle; I have been all the morning ever since breakfast, trying to find my needle, and I cannot find it."

"This is not the first needle that you have lost this week, Rosamond."

"No, mamma."

"Nor the second."

"No, mamma."

"Nor the third."

Rosamond was silent, for she felt ashamed of having been so careless as to lose four needles in one week.

"Indeed, mamma," said she, after being silent for some time, "I stuck it very carefully into my work when I put it by yesterday, I think, but I am not quite sure of that."

"Nor I either," said her mother. "I cannot be sure of that, because I know you have the habit when you leave off work of leaving your needle loose, hanging on the thread."

"But I thought that I had cured myself of that, mamma: look here, mamma, I can show you in my work the very holes in which I stuck my needle. I assure you that it falls out after I have stuck it in, because I shake my work generally before I fold it up."

"I advise you to cure yourself of the habit of shaking your work before you fold it up, then the needle will not

drop out; and you will not spend a whole morning crawling upon the ground to look for it."

"I am sure I wish I could cure myself of losing my needles, for I lost, besides my needle, a very pleasant walk yesterday, because I had no needle, and I could not sew on the string of my hat. The day before yesterday I was not ready for dinner, and papa was not pleased with me; and do you know, mamma, the reason I was not ready for dinner was that you had desired me to mend the tuck of my dress."

"Nay, Rosamond, I do not think that was the reason."

"Yes, I assure you it was, mother, for I could not come down before I had mended that tuck, and as I could not find my needle, I lost all my time looking for it, and I only found it just before the dinner bell rang."

"Then, by your own account, Rosamond, it was your having lost your needle that was the cause of your being late for dinner, not my desiring you to mend your dress."

"Yes, mamma; but I think the reason why my sister Laura keeps her needles so safely, is, that she has a housewife to keep them in, and I have no housewife, mamma, you know. Would you be so very good, mamma, as to give me a housewife, that I may cure myself of losing my needles?"

"I am glad," said her mother, "that you wish, my dear, to cure yourself of any of your little faults; as to the housewife, I'll think about it."

A few days after Rosamond had asked her mother for a housewife, as she was watering her flowers in the garden she heard the parlour window open, and she looked and saw her mother beckoning to her. She ran in. This happened in the evening, a little while after dinner.

"Look upon the table, Rosamond," said her mother, "and tell me what you see."

"I see two plums, mamma," said Rosamond, smiling, "two nice ripe purple plums."

"Are you sure that you see two nice ripe purple plums?"

"Not quite sure, mamma," said Rosamond, who at this instant recollected the purple jar; "but I will, if you please, look at them a little nearer."

She went up to the table and looked at them. "May I touch them, mamma?"

"Yes, my dear."

Rosamond touched them, and tried to smell them, and then exclaimed, "One is quite hard, and the other is soft. One is a great deal colder than the other. One smells like a plum, and the other has no smell at all. I am glad I was not quite sure, mamma; for I do believe one of them is not a plum, but a stone—a stone painted to look like a plum."

"You are quite right," said her mother; "and I am glad you remembered the purple jar. Now eat the real plum, if you think you should like it."

Rosamond ate the plum, and said that it was very sweet and good. While she was eating it, she looked very often at the stone that was painted to look like a plum, and said, "How very pretty it is! It is quite like a real plum. I daresay nobody would find out that it was not a plum at first sight. I wonder whether Laura, or my brother Godfrey would find it out as soon as I did. I should like to have that stone plum, mamma. If you had given me my choice, I would rather have had it than the real plum, which I have eaten, because the pleasure of eating a plum, you know, mamma, is soon over; but *that*," said Rosamond, pointing to the plum that was made of stone, "would last for ever, you know, mamma."

"Which do you mean, my dear, that the stone would last

for ever, or that the pleasure of having that stone plum would last for ever?"

Rosamond considered for a little while, and then answered, "I don't know, mamma, exactly which I meant: but I mean now that I think I should have a great deal of pleasure in showing that stone plum to Laura and my brother, and that I should like to have it for my own, because it is very pretty, and curious and ingenious. I mean that I would much rather have had it than the plum which I have eaten, if you had been so good as to have given me my choice."

"Well, my dear," said her mother, "as you have eaten the plum, you cannot perhaps tell exactly which you would have chosen."

"Oh, yes, indeed, mamma, I am sure, almost sure, I should have chosen the stone plum. I know if you were this instant to offer me another real plum, or this," said Rosamond, taking the stone in her hand, "I know which I should choose."

Rosamond was looking so earnestly at the stone plum, that she did not for some instants perceive a housewife which her mother placed upon the table before her.

"A housewife! A red leather housewife, mamma!" she exclaimed, as soon as she saw it, and she put down the stone plum.

Her mother now placed the plum and the housewife beside one another, and said to her, "Take your choice of these two, my dear; I will give you either the housewife, or the stone plum, whichever you like best."

"I hope, mamma," said Rosamond, with a very prudent look, "I hope I shall not make such a silly choice as I did about the purple jar. Let us consider; the plum is certainly the prettiest, but then, to be sure, the housewife would be the most useful; I should not lose my needles if I had