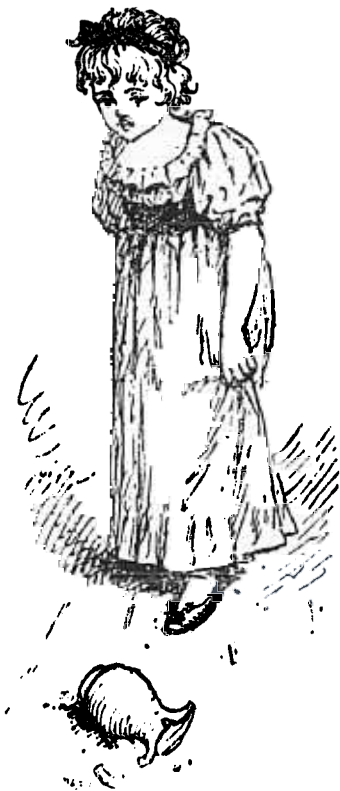


"You have lost the day, Rosamond! there's another excuse; for it is plain you had blotting-paper on your desk. Look, here it is."

Rosamond was ashamed and vexed. "For such a little, tiny excuse, to lose my day," said she; "and when I really did not see the blotting-paper. But, however, this is only Monday; I will take better care of Tuesday."



Tuesday came, and had nearly passed in an irreproachable manner; but, at supper, it happened that Rosamond threw down a jug, and as she picked it up again, she said,

"Somebody put it so near the edge of the table, that I could not help throwing it down."

This Godfrey called an excuse, though Rosamond protested that she did not mean it for one. She pleaded further, that it would be hard, indeed, if she were to lose her day for only just making this *observation*,

when it must be clear to everybody that it could not be meant for an excuse, because the jug was not broken by the fall, and it was empty, too. Moreover, not the least mischief had been done to anything or any creature; and no one had even blamed her, so that, as Rosamond said,

she had not had the slightest temptation to make an excuse.

This was all true, but Godfrey would not allow it.

That she had no temptation to make an excuse, Godfrey was most willing to grant; but he would not admit that it was therefore certain she had made none. On the contrary, he maintained, that Rosamond was in the habit of vindicating herself, even when no one blamed her, and when there was no apparent cause for making any apology. To support this assertion, Godfrey recollected and recalled several instances in which Rosamond, days, weeks, and months before this time, had done that of which she was now accused.

"Well," said Rosamond, "it is only Tuesday; I will give it up to you, brother, rather than dispute about it any more."

"That is right, Rosamond," said her mother.

Wednesday came. Rosamond determined, that whenever she was found fault with, she would not say anything in her own defence; she kept this resolution heroically. When her mother said to her,

"Rosamond, you have left your bonnet on the ground, in the hall."

Godfrey listened to Rosamond's reply, in the full expectation that she would, according to her usual custom, have answered,

"Because I had not time to put it by, mamma;" or, "because papa called me;" or, "because somebody threw it down, after I had hung it up."

But to his surprise Rosamond made none of these her habitual excuses: she answered:

"Yes, mamma, I forgot to put it in its place; I will go and put it by this minute."

Godfrey attended carefully to every word Rosamond said

this day; and the more she saw that he watched her the more cautious she became. At last, however, when Godfrey was not in the room, and when Rosamond was less on her guard, she made three excuses, one after another, about a hole in her gown, which she had neglected to mend.

"Mamma, it is not my fault; I believe it was torn at the wash."



But it was proved, by the fresh edges of the rent, that it must have been torn since it had been ironed.

Rosamond next said she had not seen the hole till after she had put the gown on; *and then*, she could not mend it, because it *was so far behind*.

"Could you not have taken the gown off again?" her mother asked.

"Yes, mamma, but I had not fine thread enough."

"But you had cotton that was fine enough, Rosamond. Three excuses!"

"Oh, mamma! have I made three excuses?" cried Rosamond. "This day, too, when I took such pains."

Godfrey came back, and seeing his sister look sorrowful, he asked what was the matter. She hesitated, and seemed very unwilling to speak; at last she said,

"You will be glad of what I am sorry for!"

"Ha! then I guess what it is; you have lost the day again, and I have won it!"

Godfrey clapped his hands in triumph, and capered about the room.

"My world is safe! safe! I really thought Rosamond would have had it to-day, mamma!"

Rosamond could hardly repress her tears; but Godfrey was so full of his own joy, that he did not attend to her feelings.

"After all, it is only Wednesday, brother, remember *that!*" cried Rosamond. I have Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday to come; I may win the day, and win the world yet."

"Not you!" said Godfrey, scornfully—"you will go on the same to-morrow as to-day. You see, you have acquired such a habit of making excuses, that you cannot help it, you cannot cure yourself; at least, not in a week. So I am safe."

"So that is all you think of, brother; and you don't care whether I cure myself of my faults or not?" said Rosamond, while the tears trickled down her cheeks. "You wish indeed that I should not cure myself. Oh, brother, is this right? is this good-natured? is this like you?"

Godfrey changed countenance, and, after standing still and thinking for a moment, said,

"It is not like me; it is not good-natured; and I am not sure that it is right. But, my dear Rosamond! I do care about you, and I do wish you would cure yourself of your faults; only this week I wish—in short, I cannot help wishing to win my wager."

"That is very natural, to be sure," said Rosamond; "but I am sorry for it; for we used to be so happy together, and now, you are always glad when I am sorry, and sorry when