

abundance of the gayest and sweetest common flowers. Roses, carnations, wallflowers, hollyhocks, dahlias, lilies, and violets were assembled there in such crowds that Laura might have plucked nosegays all day without making any visible difference; and she was also made free of the gooseberry bushes and cherry-trees, with leave to gather, if she pleased, more than she could eat.

Laura's chief delight, however, was in the dairy, which seemed the most beautiful thing she had ever beheld, being built of rough, transparent spar, which looked exactly like crystal, and reminded her of the ice palace built by the Empress of Russia. The windows were of painted glass; the walls and shelves were of Dutch tiles, and in the centre rose a beautiful jet d'eau of clear, bright water.

Laura thought it looked like something built for the fairies; but within she saw a most substantial room, the floor and tables in which were so completely covered with cheeses that they looked like some old Mosaic pavement. Here the good-natured dairymaid showed Laura how to make cheese, and afterwards manufactured a very small one, about the size of a soup plate, entirely for the young lady herself, which she promised to take home after her visit was over; and a little churn was also filled full of cream, which Laura one morning churned into butter, and breakfasted upon, after having first practised printing it into

a variety of shapes. It was altered about twenty times from a swan into a cow, and from a cow into a rose, and from a rose back to a swan again, before she could be persuaded to leave off her amusement.

Laura continued to become more and more delighted with Holiday House; and she one day skipped about Lady Harriet's room, saying,—

“Oh, I am too happy! I scarcely know what to do with so much happiness. How delightful it would be to stay here all my life, and never to go to bed, nor say any more lessons, as long as I live!”

“What a useless, stupid girl you would soon become!” observed Lady Harriet. “Do you think, Laura, that lessons were invented for no other purpose but to torment little children?”

“No, grandmamma; not exactly. They are of use also to keep us quiet.” Lady Harriet was about to show Laura how necessary these hated lessons were, when she was called away, and the lecture was postponed.

Most unfortunately, all the time of Laura's visit at Holiday House, she had been, as usual, extremely heedless, in taking no care whatever of her clothes! Consequently her blue frock had been cruelly torn; her green taffeta dress became frightfully soiled; four white frocks were utterly ruined; her muslin seemed a perfect object; and her pink zephyr was both torn and discoloured. Regularly every evening Lady Harriet told her

to take better care, or she would be a bankrupt in frocks altogether; but whatever her grandmamma said on that subject, the moment she was out of sight it went out of mind, till another dress had shared the same deplorable fate.

At last, one morning, as soon as Laura got up, Lady Harriet gravely led her towards a large table on which all the ill-used frocks had been laid out in a row; and a most dismal sight they were! Such a collection of stains and fractures was probably never seen before! A beggar would scarcely have thanked her for her blue; and the green taffeta looked like the tattered cover of a worn-out umbrella.

"Laura," said Lady Harriet, "in Switzerland a lady's wardrobe descends to many generations; but nobody will envy your successor! One might fancy that a wild beast had torn you to pieces every day! I wonder what an old clothesman would give for your whole baggage? It is only fit for being used as rags in a paper manufactory!"

Poor Laura's face became perfectly pink when she saw the destruction that a very short time had occasioned; and she looked from one tattered garment to another, in melancholy silence, thinking how lately they had all been fresh and beautiful; but now not a vestige of their former splendour remained. At last her grandmamma broke the awful silence, by saying,—

"My dear girl! I have warned you very often

lately that we are not at home, where your frocks could be washed and mended as soon as they were spoiled; but, without considering this, you have every day destroyed several. So now the maid finds, on examining your drawers, that there is only one clean frock remaining!"

Laura looked gravely at the last clean frock, and wondered much what her grandmamma would say next.

"I do not wish to make a prisoner of you at home during this very fine weather; yet in five minutes after leaving the house you will, of course, become unfit to be seen, which I should very much regret, as a number of fine people are coming to dinner, whom you would like to see. The great General Courteney, and all his aides-de-camp, intend to be here on their way from a review, besides many officers and ladies who know your papa very well, and wish to see my little granddaughter; but I would not on any account allow you to appear before them looking like a perfect tatterdemalion, as you too often do. They would suppose you had been drawn backwards through a hedge! Now my plan is, that you shall wear this old pink zephyr for romping all morning in the garden, and dress in your last clean frock for dinner; but remember to keep out of sight till then. Remain within the garden walls, as none of the company will be walking there, but be sure to avoid the terraces and shrubberies till you are made tidy; for I shall be both angry