

otherwise I should have been most happy to do."

Laura sat down and cried during a quarter of an hour after Lady Harriet had gone to dinner. She felt very sorry for having behaved ill, and sorry to have vexed her good grandmamma, and sorry not to see all the fine party at dessert, and sorry to think that next day she must leave Holiday House, and sorry, last of all, to consider what Mrs. Crabtree would say when all her ruined frocks were brought home. In short, poor Laura felt perfectly overwhelmed with the greatness and variety of her griefs, and scarcely believed that any one in the world was ever more miserable than herself.

Her eyes were fixed on her task, while her thoughts were wandering fifty miles away from it, when a housemaid, who had frequently attended upon Laura during her visit, accidentally entered the room, and seemed much surprised, as well as concerned, to find the young lady in such a way; for her sobbing could be heard in the next room. It was quite a relief to see anyone; so Laura told over again all the sad adventures of the day, without attempting to conceal how naughty she had been; and most attentively was her narrative listened to, till the very end.

"You see, Miss!" observed Nelly, "when people doesn't behave well, they must expect to be punished."

"So they should!" sobbed Laura; "and I daresay it will make me better! I would not

pass such a miserable day as this again for the world; but I deserve to be more punished than I am."

"That's right, Miss!" replied Nelly, pleased to see the good effect of her admonitions. "Punishment is as sure to do us good when we are naughty as physic when we are ill. But now you'll go down to dessert, and forget it all."

"No! grandmamma would have allowed me, and Lady Rockville and everybody was so very kind about inviting me down; but my last clean frock is quite unfit to be seen, so I have none to put on. Oh, dear! what a thousand million of pities!"

"Is that all, Miss! Then dry your eyes, and I can wash the frock in ten minutes. Give it to me, and learn your lesson, so as to be ready when I come back."

Laura sprang off her seat with joy at this proposal, and ran—or rather flew—to fetch her miserable object of a frock, which Nelly crumpled under her arm, and walked away with, in such haste that she was evidently determined to return very soon; while Laura took her good advice, and sat down to learn her task, though she could hardly look at the book during two minutes at a time—she watched so impatiently for her benefactress from the laundry.

At length the door flew open, and in walked Nelly, whose face looked as red and hot as a beef-steak; but in her hand she carried a basket, on

which was laid out, in great state, the very cleanest frock that ever was seen! It perfectly smelled of soap and water, starch and hot irons, and seemed still almost smoking from the laundry; while Laura looked at it with such delight and admiration, it might have been supposed she had never seen a clean frock before.

When Lady Harriet was sitting after dinner that day, sipping her wine, and thinking about nothing very particular, she became surprised to feel somebody gently twitching her sleeve to attract notice. Turning instantly round to ascertain what was the matter and who it could be, what was her astonishment to see Laura at her elbow, looking rather shy and frightened.

"How did you get here, child!" exclaimed Lady Harriet, in accents of amazement, though almost laughing. "Am I never to see the last of you to-day? Where did you get that frock? It must have dropped from the clouds! Or did some good fairy give you a new one?"

"That good fairy was Nelly the housemaid," whispered Laura. "She first tossed my frock into a washing-tub; and then at the great kitchen fire she toasted it, and——"

"——And buttered it, I hope," added Major Graham. "Come here, Laura! I can read what is written in your grandmamma's face at this moment; and it says, 'You are a tiresome little puss, that nobody can keep in any order except Uncle David'; therefore sit down beside him,

and eat as many almonds and raisins as he bids you."

"You are a nice, funny Uncle David!" whispered Laura, crushing her way in between his chair and Miss Perceval's; "nobody will need a tongue now, if you can read so exactly what we are all thinking."

"But here is Miss Perceval, still more wonderful; for she knows by the bumps on your head all that is contained inside. Let me see if I could do so! There is a large bump of reading, and a small one of writing and arithmetic. Here is a terrible organ of breaking dolls and destroying frocks. There is a very small bump of liking Uncle David, and a prodigious one of liking almonds and raisins!"

"No! you are quite mistaken! It is the largest bump for loving Uncle David, and the small one for everything else," interrupted Laura eagerly. "I shall draw a map of my head some day, to show you how it is all divided."

"And leave no room for anything naughty or foolish. Your head should be swept out, and put in order every morning, that not a single cobweb may remain in your brains. What busy brains they must be for the next ten years! But in the meantime let us hope that you will never again be reduced to your last clean frock."