

edly, "and the gentleman ain't a coward after all. He——"

Miss Crayley placed her hands on his shoulders and laid him down again.

"Yes," she said, "he knocked you down, and you hurt your head. You must keep quiet now, and you will be quite well in a few days."

"He said he were a coward," said Timothy positively, "and he ain't. I were an awful ghost, I——"

"Drink this," said Miss Crayley. She held a glass of something to his lips, and Timothy swallowed it obediently before he had time to realise he was obeying an order.

"Tell teacher," he said drowsily, "he ain't a coward. Not by a long chalk." His eyes closed and he slept.

Miss Crayley returned to her seat by the fire, and knitted briskly for a few minutes. Then she laid her work on her lap, and clasping her idle hands together, she leant forward and gazed into the fire. Who knows what shape an old woman's thoughts take when she gazes into the glowing embers? Truly her days of castle-building are over. In her life she has seen too many airy structures, "lightly, beautifully built," crumble into ruins before her eyes. Still the embers fascinate her, and though she sees no castles, perchance she sees more than youth with all its wealth of imagination and passionate desire to dip into the future, can ever see. For she gazes back over the long stretch of years that have been—she has "lived and moved and had her being" in the scenes that great Magician, Memory, summons to live again in the gloomy fire.

Miss Crayley sat thinking until the arch of embers fell in with a soft crash. She rose and looked long at Timothy's sleeping face.

"A little child," she said, at last, softly. "A little human plant flourishing in a bed choked with the weeds of mismanagement and dishonesty. God surely meant you to live and grow in a soil less evil. You have no chance, little boy, no

chance. Without proper support and training you will grow crooked like the people round you. Poor little fellow, I have a good mind to take you in hand—try what transplanting into a fresh soil will do. No doubt you will need much pruning—no doubt whatever." She smoothed the counterpane, and began to pace softly up and down the room.

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When the settlement knew that Miss Crayley had, in its own language, "sort of adopted" Timothy Haggart, the knowledge only intensified the general conviction that she was wanting. Timothy thought so at first, but with the quickness of childhood he soon discovered her real worth, and her motive in taking him into her household. He responded to her kindness with the shy diffidence of one not accustomed to receiving kindness. Gradually he learned to watch for her with shy, loving eyes, and then all was plain sailing between them. The woman seeing he was pliable as a willow wand, rejoiced that Providence had placed it within her power to train him up in the way he should go. His parents parted with him readily enough for a lump sum down and a small yearly remuneration. It paid the rent, a thing Timothy could not do, and there was one mouth less to feed. The plan would never answer, they felt assured; Timothy would be back on their hands before long, so they made hay philosophically while the sun shone. But the days and the weeks and the months passed, and Timothy—God bless him—did not return. He went away with Miss Crayley as soon as he was well again. The gates of the enchanted garden were locked and the house closed, with the exception of two rooms for the use of the woman in charge. The flowers bloomed in their seasons behind the high walls, and when the roses were out, Harold Crayley and the school teacher were married. Everyone agreed that the bride looked as