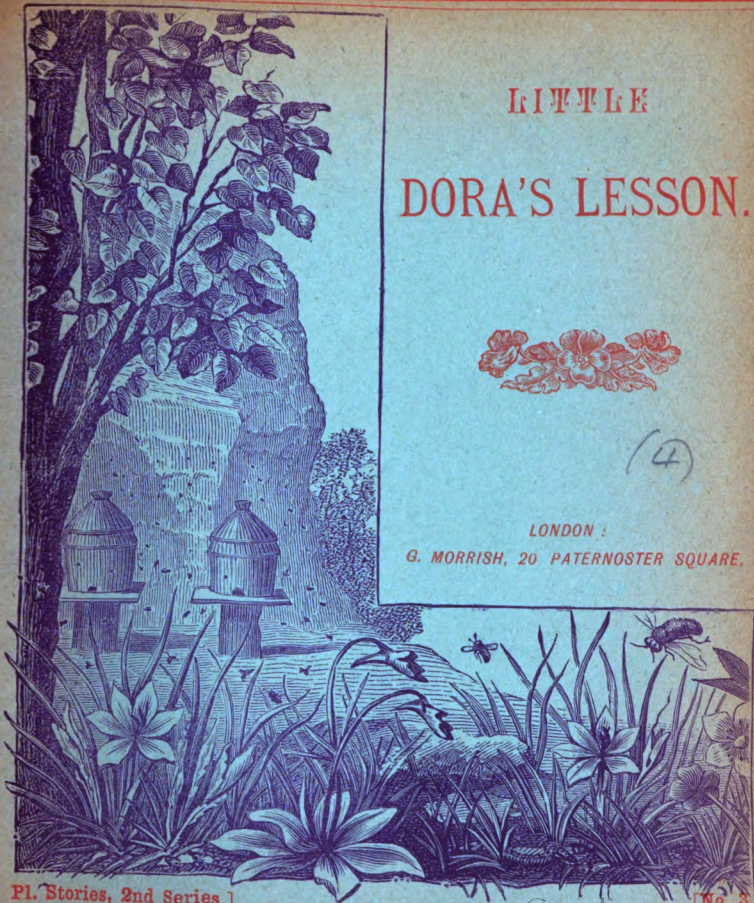


LITTLE
DORA'S LESSON.



(4)

LONDON :
G. MORRISH, 20 PATERNOSTER SQUARE.



[Pl. Stories, 2nd Series.]

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[No. 3.]



Dora and her Father.



Little Dora's Lesson.

By F. T. B.



LONDON:
G. MORRISH, 20, PATERNOSTER SQUARE.



LITTLE DORA'S LESSON.



I WANT to tell you a story of a girl whose name was Dora Lee. She lived with her dear parents at a pretty little village named Denby, near to the sea shore. It was Dora's delight whenever she was able to wander down to the shore, and watch the great waves as they rolled along with majestic strides; or, if the sea was calm, the tiny waves that were

scarcely more than a ripple on the waters, lazily lapping the shore and smoothing out the well-trodden sand like one immense sheet, so even and so flat.

Little Dora was what many would call a good girl, that is to say, she was not a wilful or disobedient child; but she had one great fault, and that was, she always thought that she knew best. But Dora had to learn that sometimes, if not always, she was not quite so wise as older people.

And this is a lesson, perhaps, that all young ones find it more or less difficult to learn. They may obey directions that are given them and yet feel all the time that their own plan was after all rather better; but Dora, poor child, had to learn the lesson in a way that I think she will never forget; and I will tell you how it happened.

One day Dora's mother was taken ill; she was out in the fields a few days before, helping to bind the sheaves, when a thunder-storm came on; poor Mrs. Lee got very wet, and it brought on such a severe cold that she had to lie in bed.

Now when mamma is not well and unable to be about the house, children should be extra careful not to do anything to grieve her, because that is very apt to make her worse, or at least to hinder her from getting well so soon as she would.

Dora was very sorry that her mother was so ill, and did her best to keep quiet, and not to hinder Mrs. Jenson, who kindly came in to help in the house until Mrs. Lee were better.

But little Dora sometimes found the long afternoons very dull all by herself. I do not know why she did not go and sit in her

mother's room to keep her company, I think I should have done so rather than feel dull and lonely; but in the mornings, you know, she fed the chickens and ran to play in the fields; and in the afternoon her mother liked her to do a little needlework, for Dora was not very strong, and her father and mother did not like her to run about too much in the hot sun.

Dora, like many other little girls, disliked sewing very much, and often longed to be playing out of doors instead; and I think the reason of this was because the sewing was like a duty or task that her mother had told her to do, and not her own choice. Had Dora been wise she would have struggled against this feeling, and remembered that she was pleasing her dear mother; by doing the sewing neatly and carefully, then I doubt not the irksomeness would

soon have disappeared, and she would have got to like the work very much.

The afternoon I am speaking about, this little girl was feeling particularly lazy and tired; it was very hot, which was just the reason why she ought to have kept quiet, instead of which, Dora threw down her work, and began to move restlessly about, and after this there was not much hope that she would settle down to sew again; she looked out at the fowls in the yard cackling and croaking with their dry throats, and she longed to go out with them. "Just to look at my dear little chickens," said Dora to herself, "I am sure mother will not mind;" and so without asking her mother, as she ought to have done, she tied on her sun bonnet and ran out at the back door.

But after all Dora did not care to look at her chickens. but looked with longing eyes

at the cool shady orchard. "I'm sure it cannot do me any harm just for a little while, it is so very hot indoors." But this little reasoning in her own mind only shewed that she did not feel quite comfortable about the matter. However she had given way to her own desires, and now she had less power than before to resist any fresh temptation. So Dora ran into the orchard, and played there amongst the rosy apples some little time.

Now you know, dear children, that when we yield to one naughty thought, Satan soon puts other naughty thoughts into our heads ; and we always find it harder to do right then, than if at first we had done right, so we often yield again.

It was so with Dora, a merry, thoughtless girl ; she soon forgot that she had no right to be out at all, and when Satan tempted

her to go just a little farther and stay out just a little longer, I am sorry to say she did not try to put away her wicked thoughts, but she did as she wanted.

Leaving the orchard she ran on to the meadow, and on again to the sea.

Away, away over the golden sand, away to her favourite retreat, a small cave under the cliffs, ran the little girl. Was it not sad that she should be so forgetful of her kind mother and father's wishes !

Well, Dora ran into her little cave, and being very hot and tired, for she had come a long way, she sat down to count her shells; all she had gathered she kept in her cave on a high shelf, for unless there was a storm or very high tides the sea never came into Dora's cave.

For a long time the little girl played with the treasures that she had, as it were, taken

from old ocean's storehouse, forgetting how the hours were passing away one after the other since she left home and came out as she thought only for a few minutes to get a breath of fresh air.

Then closing her eyes, the tired and naughty little Dora went fast asleep. When she awoke it was a little past midnight; the sun had long since gone down, and the beautiful moon had risen to light the earth in his absence.

Oh how tired and cold Dora felt; for you know that even in the hottest weather you would find it rather cold if you had to sleep out in a cave by the sea, and with only your thin summer frock on.

Well Dora felt very cold, and very unhappy too, when she found out where she was. "Oh dear!" she exclaimed in despair, "how naughty I have been, however am I

to get home?" Dora burst into tears; she was very sorry now that she saw how wrong she had been, and wondered what her poor mother and father were doing, and whether her father was looking for her.

"I must go at once," she thought, and jumping to her feet she ran to the mouth of the cave, but started back in horror. The water had come right up to the entrance.

Poor Dora, she did not know that it was the annual high tide, and was horrified to find she could not get home.

Every moment too the little waves came lapping nearer, and still nearer, and Dora was afraid the cave would soon be full.

"Oh I shall be drowned," she cried, "and I shall never see dear mother and father again." Then in the solemn moonlight, with the fear of death before her, came the thought of God.

Dora knelt down on the sand floor of her cave, and prayed very earnestly that God would forgive her for being so naughty and disobedient, and then she asked that she might get back home safely.

After a little while Dora became more happy, she still feared that the water would come up right into the cave, but she was not quite so sure that her father could not come to save her, and so she sat down and waited, and nearer and still nearer came the little waves, sleepily lapping the shore as they came.

But God who is so great can say, "Hitherto shalt thou come and no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." He heard and answered the prayer of the lonely little girl, and stayed the waves when they had come about half-way into the cave, so that Dora remained safely and quite dry

until the next morning. But what about Dora's parents, what were their thoughts when Dora was found to be missing? Ah! it gave them sad hearts indeed, for no one knew what had become of her.

They searched for her everywhere they could think of, but no Dora was to be found. At last they found a man who said he had seen her go to the little cave. Off hurried her father at once to the sea shore. He found that he could not get to the cave without a boat, but there was one near at hand, and he was quickly at the spot and calling to his daughter. Oh how thankful he was to hear her voice in reply to his shout! They all thanked God very much that day, when he was able to carry Dora back in safety to her sorrowing mother at home. They felt that God alone had preserved her from the helpless position of danger in which she

had been, and I trust too it would be like a voice to little Dora that she would never forget, and that she would be careful afterwards not to disobey her parents.

F. T. B.



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