

DEAN'S
Illustrated Farthing Books.

A FAIRY AT HOME.



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A FAIRY AT HOME.



“WHAT is my Lily thinking of?” asked Mr. F——, as he entered the sitting-room, where the little girl was leaning her forehead against the window-pane, gazing on the evening sky.

“Oh! nothing, papa,” said Lilian, starting from her reverie, and taking up a book of fairy tales.

“Such a quiet time for thinking should hardly be wasted,” said the father, kindly. “But try to recall the train of ideas which I interrupted. Your book, I see, stimulates the imagination. I would like to know what way its influence tends.”

“You will think me very foolish, papa. I was just imagining how I should like to be a fairy.”

“What is a fairy?” inquired the father, innocently.

“Why, you know, papa, just as well as I do. Little people, who wear mantles made of tulip-leaves, and ride in snail-shell coaches drawn by dragon-flies. But the best of it is, they have power to do such wonderful things, and always use it for such good purposes.”

“Do they, indeed?” said Mr. F——, in a serio-comic tone.

“There now, papa, you are laughing at me. Now you know I don't believe all this; only the stories say so, and I always like to imagine such stories to be true.”

“I have not the slightest objection to your believing in fairies, if there were any need

of them ; but really I think all the good works attributed to them, can be just as well effected by human agencies. Tell me, now, what you would do if you were a fairy."

" Oh ! a thousand things, papa. In the first place, you need not go any more to that old office, for whenever you wanted money, I could tap with my wand, and up would come heaps of gold and silver. Then I would make mamma well, and keep her so. Oh ! there's no end to the good things I would do !"

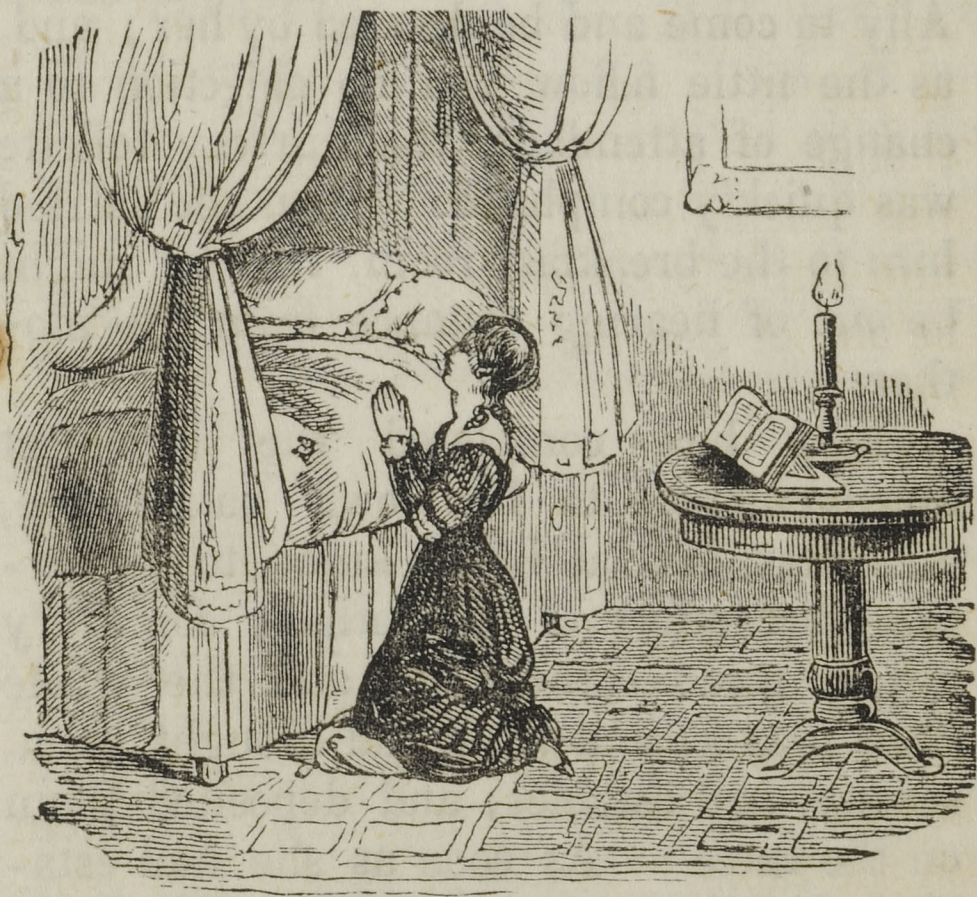
" Would it not be better, my dear little girl, to make the utmost use of the power you have, instead of spending hours of musing in wishing for more ?"

" All the power *I* have, is very little, you know, papa."

" Very little, certainly, but not so little as you may suppose. I would rather have my own little daughter here to welcome me home at night, than possess all the gold and silver that fairies were ever fabled to produce. And the gentle, quiet influence of a loving daughter is worth

more to your sick mother, than the touch of a fairy's wand upon her brow. Depend upon it, my dear child, God has given to you a work, which, well accomplished, will produce more beautiful results than any romance of fairy-land."

Lilian sat for a few moments musing, and then the summons to tea prevented



further conversation. The first thought that entered her little head the next

morning was, "I'll be a fairy to-day." But the winter air was chilly; and Lilian's fairy work seemed not quite so easy and beautiful as the evening before. At this moment, however, she heard little Ally's voice in the next room, wide awake, and sure to disturb his sick mother. Lilian slipped softly into the room, and persuaded Ally to come and be dressed by her; and, as the little fellow had no objection to a change of attendant, the nursery toilette was quickly completed. Then she carried him to the breakfast-room, that he might be out of hearing-distance from his mother.

Sally had completed the breakfast arrangements, to her own satisfaction, doubtless, but, as Lilian knew, to the certain discomfort of her father; for every article stood cornerwise, and the whole effect was as if a wind had brought cloth, service, and estables, and deposited them on the table. As soon as she had established Ally with his building-blocks in the corner, Lilian neatly and quietly rearranged everything upon the table.

"Mother always did this," said Lilian

to herself. "How careless I have been not to think of it before!"

At this moment, Willie burst into the room.

"I wish mother wasn't sick," he exclaimed, "There's no one to tie my neck-cloth, or put up my dinner for school, or find my books."

"Perhaps I can fix your neck-tie. Come here," said Lilian, "and let me try." And she secretly resolved that she would practice trying every day, until she was perfect in the work. The neck-tie was arranged even to Willie's satisfaction, and the stray books were all found and put in the satchel.

The father then appeared. An unusual expression of contentment was upon his countenance as he sat down to a comfortable breakfast.

After her father had gone, Lilian put up the luncheon in Willie's dinner-basket, and saw her brother started for school, then crept softly to her mother's room, which she dusted and arranged in the order that best suited her mother's taste, moving, all the time, with such a gentle,

fairy-like tread, that the lightest slumber could not have been disturbed. By this time, Ally had become wearied of his efforts at self-amusement, and must have some assistance. Lilian built houses, bridges, and towers, all perfectly satisfactory to the small employer.

All day long, his little attendant was fully occupied in amusing him, and she had time only to put the sitting-room again in order, and bring her father's study-gown and slippers, when his key was heard at the door. Lilian placed herself demurely in her old seat by the window, and was looking out with a somewhat more happy expression than on the previous night.

"Some good fairy has been at work, I guess," said Mr. F——, as he took the comfortable easy-chair, and glanced at the usually noisy little Ally, who was now deeply absorbed in Lily's favourite portfolio of engravings.

"Oh! no, papa," replied Lilian, as she drew herself over the side of the chair into his arms; "no one in the world, but your little FAIRY AT HOME."