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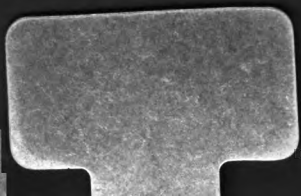
THE  
FOUR HAPPY DAYS



*FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL*



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THE FOUR HAPPY DAYS.



THE  
FOUR HAPPY DAYS.

BY

FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL,  
*Author of 'Bruey, a Little Worker for Christ.'*



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**MURRAY AND GIBB, EDINBURGH,  
PRINTERS TO HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE.**

TO  
CLEMENT AND ERNEST,

WITH

*AUNT FANNY'S LOVE.*





## *The Four Happy Days.*

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### CHAPTER I.

**M**ARCH at last! I wish it was April.  
No; I wish it was May!' said  
Annie. 'Oh dear, what a long  
time it takes to get to the end of a month!'

She said it to a lady who had lately come to live in her father's parish, and to whom she had taken a great fancy, partly because she was so very kind and pleasant, and partly because she would sometimes leave the grown-up people and have what Annie called 'a nice talk' with her, submitting to be asked

questions by the dozen about all sorts of things, great and small, which Annie 'wanted to know about,' and which never came in her lesson-books. Miss Allen laughed at this great grievance of the long months, which had once or twice before been spoken of in the same tone.

'You ought not to complain now; February finished two or three days sooner than any other month, and yet you are not a bit grateful. But, Annie, why are you in such a hurry to get through the months? They go too fast for me instead of too slowly. I am glad you have not the managing of them.'

'Because I want my four happy days to come, and none of them come for so long yet.'

'Your four happy days? I thought none of your days were particularly *unhappy*; but what are these special ones? I have never heard about them yet.'

‘Then I’ll tell you, may I? Can you stay? Oh, it’s so nice to have you all to myself! I hope nobody will come in just directly.’ And Annie settled herself on a foot-stool by Miss Allen, holding one of her hands in both her own, stroking and fondling it as if it were a pussy, while she gave her explanation.

‘I looked in the almanacs as soon as we got them, to see when the first of my four happy days would come. I could have found it in the Prayer-book, only I did not think of it in time. The others I knew without, quite well. It is Whit-Monday, and that is why I want the end of May to be here. You have not been with us on a Whit-Monday yet, and you can’t think how nice it is! All the Sunday schools go to the cathedral in the morning; the nave is quite filled: I go with my own class, and sit with them. Then we come back and have the

school feast, and I help to hand the cake ; and then all the rewards are given, and we have ever so much singing—such lovely things, you have not heard them yet ; and then the boys cheer for the Queen, and for Papa, and for some other people, and the girls clap ; they do make such a noise—it is such fun ! Oh, I am so happy that day ! And I forgot, that is not all. We decorate the room early in the morning, and the cake is made the Saturday before, and all the reward books are in the house for several days, and I may have them to read. Do you know little Mary Passey in my class,—the tiny child, with funny little black eyes ? I think she will get the best book in the class next Whit-Monday. Now, do be at home for it ; don't go out on a visit just then, please.'

'Well, I will not if I can help it,' said

Miss Allen. 'I think this first happy day sounds very pleasant. What is the second?'

'Oh, the second is the 18th of July. You could not guess why that is one, so I'll tell you. It is little Louie's birthday—my niece. Don't laugh, now, Miss Allen; it's too bad: why should not I have a niece as well as other people? I was an aunt when I was only six years old, and now I am eleven. Well, I always go to Elmerton for her birthday, and stay a week or two at least. You know she is the only one, and they always keep her birthday. All the labourers' wives and children come to dinner in the servants' hall, and I dare say they will have a party afterwards. Then I go rides on the pony when I am at Elmerton, and my great friend Katie comes to stay with me. Am I tiring you, Miss Allen? But I want to tell you the others, if you don't mind. There is a



long time to wait from the second to the third happy day,—nearly four months; it is the 5th of November. We can't have bonfires in a town, you know; but more than two years ago Maria Silter and I made a capital plan for keeping it. We begin in August, and ask all our friends to give us something, sixpences and threepenny bits, and sometimes we get shillings. I keep the accounts, and we call it the "Flannel Petticoat Society." As soon as we have got enough, we go and buy some flannel, but we don't stop collecting till the end of October. (Oh, Miss Allen, would you give me something for it next August? No; will you really? A shilling! Oh, you *are* a darling!) What was I telling you?—oh, about the flannel. One of my sisters or one of hers goes with us to get it, and then we set to work and make as many flannel petticoats

(all ourselves) as we can get money for. Last year we made twenty-nine. Then my sisters help me to make a list of the children who are to have them, and they come to the rectory for them on the 5th of November. It is such fun measuring them. We run tucks in, because the flannel shrinks, you know, when it is washed. Then we give each child a piece of cake, and make them sing; then Maria stays to tea with me. I daresay we shall make more than thirty petticoats this year. I can work faster now, and it seems to me one can always do everything better every year than we could the year before; doesn't it seem so to you, Miss Allen?'

'I wish it did, Annie dear! But what is the fourth happy day?'

'That is the only one I do not know exactly about; it is my birthday, the 16th

of December. You see, I can't tell beforehand what presents I shall have, nor what birthday treat I shall have—perhaps Maria will come to tea; but, anyhow, it will be my birthday. So these are my four happy days; and I should think you don't wonder now that I want this stupid March and April to be done with, do you? Miss Allen, dear, what is the matter?' And Annie's merry eager face changed as she saw Miss Allen looking down on her so lovingly, yet, somehow, so sadly, that it almost startled her. Miss Allen put the hand of which Annie had not taken possession upon her head, and did not speak for a minute, during which Annie looked up into her face in wondering and rather unusual silence.

'Annie, dear, what if the happy days never come for you? or what if they come, and yet are *not* happy days?'

‘Oh, Miss Allen, Whit-Monday always comes; why, it’s in the Prayer-book! And Louie’s birthday can’t be altered; and the 5th of November *must* be happy; and——’ Just then the door opened softly, and a gentle and very delicate-looking young lady came in.

‘She will be able to see you now, I think, if you like to come up-stairs, dear Jessie.’

Miss Allen rose. ‘Thank you,’ she said; ‘I am so glad she is less suffering to-day. I have brought a few more flowers, Mary, dear; the last must be quite faded now.’ ‘Oh, how good of you!’ said Mary. ‘Mamma does so enjoy them! I never saw an invalid value flowers so much.’ Then she turned to her little sister, and asked her to bring a certain little vase to her mamma’s room. Annie trotted briskly away to fetch it, and then returned to her occupation of

colouring a missionary map, much wishing that grown-up people would not always take such gloomy views of things; even Miss Allen, it seemed, was no better in this respect than others. What harm could it be to look forward to her four happy days?



## JESUS, BLESSED SAVIOUR.

*Tune—Hermas.*

Words and Music by F. R. H.

Je - sus, blessed Saviour! Help us now to raise

Songs of glad thanks-giv-ing, Songs of ho - ly praise.

Oh, how kind and gracious Thou hast al-ways been!

B



Oh, how ma-ny bless-ings Eve-ry day has seen!

CHORUS.



Je - sus, bless - ed Sa - viour! Now our praises hear,



For Thy grace and fa-vour, Crowning all the year. A-men.

Jesus, holy Saviour !  
 Only Thou canst tell  
 How we often stumbled,  
 How we often fell !

All our sins (so many) !  
 Saviour, Thou dost know :  
 In Thy blood most precious,  
 Wash us white as snow.

*Chorus*—Jesus, blessed Saviour !  
 Keep us in Thy fear ;  
 Let Thy grace and favour  
 Pardon all the year.

Jesus, loving Saviour !  
 Only Thou dost know  
 All that may befall us,  
 As we onward go.

So we humbly pray Thee,  
 Take us by the hand ;  
 Lead us ever upward  
 To the Better Land.

*Chorus*—Jesus, blessed Saviour !  
 Keep us ever near ;  
 Let Thy grace and favour  
 Shield us all the year.


Jesus, precious Saviour !  
 Make us all Thine own ;  
 Make us Thine for ever,  
 Make us Thine alone !

Let each day, each moment,  
 Of this glad New Year,  
 Be for Jesus only,—  
 Jesus, Saviour dear !

*Chorus*—Then, O blessed Saviour !  
 Never need we fear,  
 For Thy grace and favour  
 Crown our bright New Year.



## CHAPTER II.

T last March was gone, and April too, and May was come. The evenings grew longer and brighter every week, till Annie could go to bed in the twilight without any candle. She liked that, because it was a change. Besides, it was nice to go to sleep before it was quite dark, and her little room looked snug and pleasant till the very last, when she shut her eyes and said good-night to it.

That little room was a great thing to Annie. It was her consolation in leaving a pretty country home with a large garden, that in the town home she should have a room all to herself; and it went a long way towards making up for the loss. A funny

little hole it was, with a ceiling that sloped down on one side almost to the edge of the bed. There was a little casement window, with a sill broad enough to serve as a table, and a blue curtain, which Annie could draw round her chair, and then she fancied herself in the cosiest little nest in the world. There were two shelves over the head of the bed, by the window, and these held all her own books and a few which had descended to her from elder sisters ; so, when she awoke early in the summer mornings, they were nicely within reach, and she could read till it was time to get up. On the other side of the window was a chest of drawers, and by the foot of the bed a washstand, the door coming between them. The room would not hold any more, but this was quite enough ; and if it had been any larger, it would not have been so cosy.

The view from the window was not beautiful, and yet it was better than nothing. All that could be seen near was old red brick, very smoky ; except on one side, where one end of the church came in sight, and that was old grey stone, and very smoky too. But among the ugly warehouse walls and tiled roofs there was one little opening, and the window was high enough to get the benefit of it. That opening showed a little bit of real country, and a very pretty bit too; for it just faced Elbury, a hill with tall trees on the top, only a mile or two away. And the warehouses did not interfere much with the clouds, which had been Annie's great friends since she had had no trees to sit in and make up fancies about. Sometimes she watched them, and wondered all sorts of things about them, and especially wished she could reach the splendid white ones,

which looked like snow mountains that could be climbed and rested upon. But she found in a book that they were only vapour like the others, and that there would be nothing to rest upon and look down from—only dismal thick mist and rain. Poor Annie! There are other bright things besides shining clouds which, when reached, are only mist and tears. Whit-Monday came and went, and its sunset found Annie kneeling on the chair, leaning her little arms on the window-seat, and feeling as if she wished she had something to lean her little heart on too. It had been a lovely day, and the school feast had been held as usual; and yet not quite as usual. Her papa had only been there part of the time; her sisters had only come in turn, each for an hour or two; the teachers seemed sad, and spoke very gently to Annie; and the children

seemed to feel that something was different, and they were less merry than last Whit-Monday. There was a cloud upon the day, and it was worse and gloomier than the same cloud upon a common day, which was never expected to be so bright.

When Annie came home she had gone to her mamma's room, to tell her about Mary Passey's prize, and how Sarah Jones had broken her tea-cup, and how nice Alice Burton looked in the little jacket Mary had made for her, and sundry other pieces of news. But Mary met her at the door, and said very softly, 'You must not chatter too fast this evening, Annie; Mamma cannot bear much. Don't stay long.' So Annie had gone in saddened and subdued, and hardly told anything at all; and now she had come up to bed, and was musing over some words which had been spoken, and

over the strange fact that Whit-Monday had come, and the feast had been held, and yet it had not been a very 'happy day.' The words were, 'Annie, dear, pray to God to prepare you for all that He is preparing for you.' Her mamma said them very feebly and solemnly when she said good-night, and now they seemed to sound over and over again, so that they never should or could be forgotten. 'I wonder what He is preparing for me!' she thought. 'Oh, I do hope He is preparing one of the many mansions for me! oh, I wish I knew whether He is! But I don't think He is preparing me for it, else I should not feel so naughty so often. Oh, I wish I were good! I wonder if I ever shall be. I wish I loved God. I know I ought, He is so good; I know that, and yet I don't feel as if I loved Him. Oh, I do wish I did!' Annie thought God was not preparing her, because

she felt she was not prepared, and because she had begun to see that she did not love Him, and to wish very much that she did. Does any dear little girl who is reading this feel something like Annie? Dear child, listen, and do not hurry on with the story; but think about this for a minute or two, and perhaps it will help you and make you happier. Do not think, because you feel you are not good, and because you cannot say you love God and think how sad and wrong it is that you do not, and only wish you did love Him, that therefore He does not love you and care about you. If you feel this, and it makes you sorry, and you want to feel different, and to be like the people you know who do love the Lord Jesus and feel safe and happy, it is a sign that God is preparing you for what He is preparing for you. It is the Holy Spirit who is beginning to teach you

His first lesson, which is, that you are a great sinner. Ask Him now to teach you the next lesson,—for it is a sweet and blessed one,—that the Lord Jesus is a great Saviour.

But Annie's mamma meant something besides this, something sadder and nearer, which she knew God was surely preparing day by day for her little girl. Annie could hardly remember the time when she had been *quite* well, but for more than a year she had been very ill, and always suffering pain. Now she was very weak indeed, and she knew that it could not be very long before she would be singing the 'new song' in perfect joy, while all Annie's little songs would be hushed in great sorrow, the greatest that a child can know. And she perhaps prayed all the more that Annie might be prepared to bear it, because she saw how strangely unprepared she was for it. For it was strange.



Though she saw so many sorrowful looks, and heard so many sad messages given to kind friends, and though she so often heard her mamma speak of going to heaven, and never of getting well, she would not believe, and did not believe, that she was going to die. There was a very wretched feeling which seemed to live down at the bottom of her heart, underneath everything else, that perhaps it *might* be true after all ; but whenever this feeling came up, even for an instant, she smothered and hushed it down, and would not listen to it. 'It can't be, and it won't be,' she said to herself ; 'I am sure Mamma will soon be better ; she is not so ill as she was last winter.' And because she wished and tried hard to believe this, she really persuaded herself into believing it ; and as she never would stay to listen to anything her sisters said about their dear

manma being worse, lest it should wake up this wretched feeling again, she succeeded at last in keeping it quiet and asleep. Yet all through these months, the dark, solemn shadow that rested on that sad and quiet rectory fell upon Annie's spirit too. God was gently preparing her by it, both for sorrow and for joy.



*For Two Voices.*

JESSIE'S FRIEND. Music by Alberto Randegger.

Words by F. R. H.

*Tenderly.*

Lit - tle Jes - sie, dar - ling pet, Do you want a Friend :



One who ne - ver will for - get, Lov - ing to the end ;



One whom you can tell, when sad, Eve - ry - thing that grieves ;



One who loves to make you glad ; One who ne - ver leaves ?

Such a loving Friend is ours, —

Near us all the day ;

Helping us in lesson hours,

Smiling on our play ;

---

Keeping us from doing wrong,  
Guarding everywhere ;  
Listening to each happy song,  
And each little prayer.

Jessie, if you only knew  
What He is to me,  
Surely you would seek Him too,  
You would 'Come and see.'  
Come, and you will find it true,  
Happy you will be ;  
Jesus says, and says to you,  
'Come! O come to Me!'



## CHAPTER III.

**J**UNE came and went, and at last the 18th of July came, little Louie's birthday. But Annie was not at Elmerton, and little Louie had no birthday wreath and no birthday party that year. It was a sultry morning, hazy and hot; but it was not to keep out the heat that the blinds were all closed. Annie stood by the window in a front room at the top of the house, and looked into the street through the little space between the window-frame and the blind, which was not drawn quite straight. All the shops that she could see had their shutters up, and yet it was not Sunday. She had a new frock on that morning, but it was no pleasure to her: it was black—the

first black dress she had ever worn. She knew it would be dreadful to look out of that window, and yet she felt as if she *must* look. She did not cry; she only stood and shivered in the warm air.

Very slowly and very quietly a funeral passed out of the little front gate, and in another minute was out of sight, turning into the church. Then Annie stood no longer, but rushed away to her own little room, and flung herself on her little bed, face down, and cried, 'Oh, mamma! mamma! mamma!' It seemed as if there were nothing else in her little heart but that one word, and the great floods of tears that burst out with it. The strange hope which had lasted all that week was gone. She had found curious things in books, and one was, that people had sometimes been supposed to be dead and yet it was only a trance, and they had revived,

and even recovered. The idea had possessed her that it might be so now, and again and again she had gone into the room when no one was near, and drawn the curtain aside, half-expecting to see the dear eyes unclose, and to feel the cold cheek warm again to her kiss. But it was no trance. The dear suffering mother was at rest, seeing Jesus face to face. Only the smile of holy peace was left upon her lips, and that remained to the last, telling of life beyond death; and this, perhaps, helped to keep Annie clinging to this wild hope. She had never seen the solemn beauty of that smile before. But now all hope was gone, utterly gone, and she *knew* that she was motherless. For a long time, she never knew how long, she lay sobbing, every now and then repeating that one word, never any other. She did not *think*,—she could not,—she only *felt*. No one came to

her; she would not have spoken or moved if they had.

At last she fell asleep.

You will not want to hear more about that sorrowful day, so we will pass on to a happier one. But that was not the 5th of November. *That* passed almost unnoticed, and no 'Flannel Petticoat Society' held its festival. After that sad 18th of July Annie and her sisters were away from home for a long time. Mary especially needed long rest and change of air. When they returned, Maria Silter was away; and there were reasons why it was thought better that for that year the little plan should be given up. Annie did not understand them, and at another time would have been bitterly disappointed, for nothing pleased her better than a little bustle and business. But under the shadow of her great sorrow she had



learned to be more patient in lesser things, and so she said little about it. Besides, it was not like the year before, when each garment was shown to her dear mamma, and everything was talked about to her,—who was to have them, how much the flannel cost, and what new friend she had thought of asking for a donation to make up what was still wanted. So the 5th of November came and went, just as the other days did all through that weary autumn. Most people thought Annie's grief soon wore off, or rather that it had never been very deep at all. For, just because it was deep, and did not wear off very soon, Annie did her utmost from the very first to conceal it. Not that it was always heavy upon her, for, if anything occupied her attention or caught her fancy, she had a happy faculty of entirely forgetting everything else for the moment, and

throwing herself as completely into what was passing as if it were all the world to her. And thus it happened that a merry laugh would burst out, or a sudden light-heeled scamper up-stairs or down-stairs be made, which naturally led others to think that she could not have many sad thoughts; whereas not a minute before or after, the little heart would be as heavy as I hope not many little girls' hearts ever are.

Of all things, she dreaded hearing her beloved mother spoken of, partly because it seemed too sacred a subject for any one to talk about, but chiefly because it brought up such a terrible flood of sorrow that she could not control herself. So, if she even guessed that anything was going to be said, she would instantly turn the subject so decidedly that it was impossible to come back to it; or, if alluded to in her hearing, she would slip

out of the room in a moment. No one ever saw her cry after the first few days. But God did. He who said, 'I have seen, I have seen,' when His people were suffering in Egypt, saw all the tears that flowed when the blue curtain was drawn round the chair, and Annie leant her head on the window-seat in the autumn twilight, and did not even look up at the clouds.



*For Two Voices.*

T R U S T.

Words by F. R. H.  
Music by Alberto Randegger.

Sad-ly bend the flow-ers In the hea-vy rain ;



Af-ter beat - ing show-ers, Sun-beams come a - gain.



Lit-tle birds are si-lent All the dark night through,



But when morning dawneth, Their songs are sweet and new.

When a sudden sorrow  
 Comes like cloud and night,  
 Wait for God's to-morrow,  
 All will then be bright.  
 Only wait and trust Him  
 Just a little while ;  
 After evening tear-drops,  
 Shall come the morning smile.

## CHAPTER IV.

**N**OVEMBER was gone, and December came, and brought Annie's twelfth birthday. Could that be a happy day? Surely not,—the first birthday with no dear mamma's kiss! She did not expect that to be a happy day, and wished it were over.

All this time Miss Allen had often had 'nice talks' with her, sometimes a few minutes, now and then a whole half-hour, and two or three times it had been more still, when Miss Allen had kindly taken Annie for a country walk, while her sisters were busy in their districts and schools. Miss Allen soon found out that Annie could not yet bear to have her great loss touched

upon, and so she wisely and kindly waited till months, perhaps years, should soften it, and make it less trying to her to hear the name spoken, less impossible to speak it herself to any human ear.

What were these talks about? Often they began merrily enough: Annie had funny little anecdotes to tell of the sayings and doings of her class, for the little children would tell her more than an older teacher could have got from them; or she was burning to describe some *very* interesting book which Maria Silter had lent her; or Miss Allen gave her a playful cross-examination about what she did all day, as she had such mere pretences of lessons; or made believe not to understand some of her accounts, and to be very stupid when Annie tried to explain in different ways what she meant; Annie in return pretending to be very im-

patient and cross with her, and yet of course enjoying it extremely. But, somehow, very often, and at last almost always, the talk became more serious and yet not less pleasant. Miss Allen had been a little child herself, like other people, but she had not, like most other people, forgotten how children feel, and what sort of thoughts pass through their minds, which they find it very hard to speak about to any one. She believed, too, that in some ways they do not feel so very differently from grown-up people after all, and that many of the sad thoughts which she herself had known were very like some of Annie's, and that the same things which comforted her would comfort Annie, if only God opened her little heart to receive them.

And thus it was that, though she never asked Annie any questions, the child often wondered how Miss Allen could possibly

know what she was thinking of, as over and over again she seemed to do. Miss Allen spoke about the words of the Lord Jesus to the woman of Samaria, 'Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again,' and of what that meant; and Annie understood it quite well, because her happiest days had never seemed so perfectly happy as she had fancied them beforehand, and she knew very well what it was to feel something like thirst,—a wanting *something*, she could not tell what, but something that would fill her heart, and make her understand the words which follow,—'shall never thirst.' Or if Miss Allen spoke of other words from the same gracious lips, of how He said, 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden,' Annie thought how glad she would be to come, because she knew what it was to feel weary and heavy laden. The blue curtain would



have borne witness to that if it could have spoken, and so would the window-seat, on which the little arms so often leant in the twilight; yet she did not tell her friend all this. Only, if they were alone, and a pause came, Annie would nestle down by her, and lay her head on her lap, and say, 'There, now, that's nice; now talk to me,' in a quieter, lower tone than usual. Miss Allen knew what that meant without being told, and what the little girl wanted, and how the little heart was longing for something to rest upon, something to satisfy it,—longing for forgiveness, longing for peace, longing for Jesus. So, week after week she spoke about Him,—the One, the only One, the loving Saviour,—who calls the sinful and sorrowful ones to come to Him. And she told Annie that the wish to come was only the echo of His call, and that no one ever wanted to

come but when He was calling them, just as she never heard the echo from the side of Elbury but when a strong, clear voice rang out to awake it. Then, if He wanted people to come to Him, it must be because He loved them. 'You would not want me to come to the rectory, Annie, if you did not love me?' To this, and to all that might have called forth an answer, Annie only replied by pressing the hand which she held, and now and then with 'You darling!' which to some persons might have passed for no answer at all, but Miss Allen knew better. But when the birthday came with which this chapter began, a different and fuller answer was given.

It was Annie's birthday request that Miss Allen might come to tea, if only she would. She came soon after dinner, so as to have a long afternoon, for Annie was not the only

one who wanted 'a talk with Miss Allen.' In honour of the day, however, her great privilege was conceded, that she should have Miss Allen 'all to herself for a bit' at first. So the kind friend allowed herself to be led to the drawing-room, where no one else was to come till Annie had had a reasonable share of her. The lamps were not lit, for the firelight was too pleasant to be interfered with sooner than was necessary! How glad Annie was to sit at her feet, and feel her hand stroking her hair, and resting gently and lovingly on her forehead. Even more so than usual, for it had been an unusually sad and weary day to Annie. She had wandered into the room where that day last year her dear suffering mamma's sweet birthday kiss had been given her, and then rushed away again, lest she should be found there. She could not settle to anything; she

had no lessons to do, no book that she much cared to read, no amusement that seemed worth trying; the hours were long and heavy, and full of sad thoughts. That was no wonder, you will say. Yet the saddest were not because her dear mamma was gone to heaven. There was a darker thought still. What if she should never see her again? Even that was not quite the darkest. What if, after all dear Miss Allen had said to her, she should never be saved at all, never be able to love and praise the Saviour, never see Him in His beauty, but go on always fearful and unhappy, with a feeling of being 'far off' all her life, and at last be lost for ever? She had prayed over and over again, but she did not feel sure she was heard, and felt almost sure she was not answered. She had asked the Lord Jesus to wash away all her sins in His precious blood; but how should

she ever know that He had? Even when the thought came like a gleam of light, 'Perhaps I *am* forgiven, and safe, though I don't know it!' it was quickly followed by another, 'But perhaps I am not!' and then all was darkness and sadness again. So she longed for the afternoon, when Miss Allen would be almost sure to talk to her again about the things for which she cared more and more every day; and before she went down-stairs to meet her, she shut the door of her little room, and prayed, 'O Lord, do save me; do forgive me! I do so want to love Thee; oh, do change my heart and make me good and happy! And oh! do grant that Miss Allen may talk to me, and let it do me good; for Jesus Christ's sake.'

So Miss Allen and Annie sat together, and Miss Allen began to tell her about a little girl whom she had taught years before,

and who had died very happily, mentioning some of the sweet and holy things she said. Annie listened sorrowfully; it all made her feel how different it was with her, and how little she could enter into the dying child's happy, quiet trust in the Good Shepherd. Tears began to trickle through her fingers as she hid her face in her hands, and bent her head lower and lower by Miss Allen's knee. At last she could bear it no longer, and with a great effort said, 'Oh, Miss Allen, I wish—I wish I were good!'

'So do I, my pet,' she answered; 'I wish I were good, so we are wishing together.'

'Oh, but, dear Miss Allen, I don't mean that; you know what I mean, only I did not like to put it in other words. It is—oh, Miss Allen!—if I did but know Jesus would love me and save me, and if I could but love Him!'

She had never spoken out in this way before. Miss Allen did not seem to keep her waiting, and yet there was time for a prayer that she might be guided to say the right thing to the poor little anxious heart.

‘What would you give to know it, Annie?’

‘Oh, *everything!* I mean it.’

‘Everything means a great deal, Annie; it means your home and everybody whom you love, even your dear papa. Do you mean *really* everything?—that you would rather love Jesus and know He loves you than keep all these?’

‘Oh, Miss Allen, if you only knew! oh, indeed, indeed I would!’

She said slowly, and very firmly, ‘Then, Annie, dear child, I believe that it will not be very long before the Lord Jesus takes away the doubt and sorrow. I believe He will very soon make you see that He loves

you, and then you will know that you love Him, and the fear will be gone.'

Annie raised her head, and looked up at the earnest, loving face and undoubting eyes, which added to the force of the words.

'Annie, this longing for Jesus is because He is drawing you to Himself. And why is He drawing you?'

Annie did not answer. She knew Miss Allen would give the answer if she did not; but a thrill of hope came over her as she listened eagerly for it.

'Truly and only because He loves you, Annie,—*loves* you. And do you think He will let you be lost when He loves you?'

Annie's answer was first a smile, then an utterly sorrowful look, which said as plainly as words could have said, 'But I can't quite believe it; and perhaps I shall be lost after all!'



Miss Allen read the look, and said, 'It is that you do not trust the Lord Jesus,—you do not quite believe that He means what He says. Why won't you trust Him, Annie?'

The tears came again, and she said, 'I can't bear not to trust Him. I don't know why I don't; but I don't, I know, else I should be happy.'

'Annie, listen.'

There was little need to tell her to listen, for the tone and manner almost made her hold her breath.

'Listen, and do not answer me, but think. If the Lord Jesus came now—now this moment—came in His glory, and you saw Him,—Jesus Himself,—the same Jesus who said 'Come unto Me,'—could you not trust yourself to *Him*—to HIM?'

There was silence. Annie's heart had an answer which just then she could not give

even to Miss Allen,—an answer which could only be given to One, could only be laid at His feet who had put it into her friend's heart to ask that question, and sent the power of His Spirit with it.

She rose without a word, only stayed for one quick, fond kiss, and ran away to her own room, to kneel alone with Jesus. To that solemn appeal the answer had flashed up, strong and happy, 'I could, oh, surely I could! How could I *not* trust Him if He came and I saw Him?—Him—Jesus Himself! Oh, if I could but see Him now!' And then came the impulse to go away at once, and kneel before Him, and tell Him she would doubt His love no longer—just to throw herself at His feet, with all her naughtiness and all her fears, and tell Him she loved Him.

Long she knelt by the little bed, telling

Him this and much more, and wondering how it was that she never trusted herself to Him before. It was so new and so joyful to say, 'Jesus, *dear* Saviour!' The very words were sweet as she looked up through the dusk, and reverently whispered them; and the thought that she had come to Him, and that He had graciously received her, was sweeter still. There could be no mistake about it, for it was Himself and no other who said, 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.' She had come, and He could not have cast her out while His words stood certain and true. She had doubted them long enough; she would trust them now. And in so doing she found rest,—the rest she had heard of and could hardly imagine, because it seemed so far out of her reach. But the Lord Jesus is *always* true to His word, even to little children. There is

rest, sweet rest and peace, for them as well as for older people. Ask Him to give it you, dear little ones; come to Him for it, and you will not be disappointed.

Annie came down to tea quiet and bright. Everything looked pleasant to her, for there was sunshine within which shone brighter than any lamp on that dark December evening. Strangers would have remarked nothing; neither did her sisters, who were busily planning sundry Christmas arrangements as to distribution of gifts in the parish, in conclave with the curate and Miss Allen, whose district was the largest and poorest. But Miss Allen marked the satisfied, happy look, and recognised it. She 'took knowledge' of her that she 'had been with Jesus.'

Annie stayed up to supper that night, by special request of the curate, who said it was

too bad to send anybody off to bed at eight o'clock, when it was the only birthday they had all the year round.

After supper, Miss Allen went to put on her bonnet, and Mary was going up-stairs with her; but Miss Allen playfully declined her attendance, and said Annie ought to pay for her supper by acting lady's maid after it; so Mary resigned in Annie's favour. It was a very little thing to do for dear Miss Allen, just to find her gloves, and hand her her bonnet, but it was more than ever a pleasure. When she was ready, she took both Annie's hands, and kissed her, and said, 'Annie, I have not forgotten about your four happy days; have you?' 'No, Miss Allen.' 'Dearie, I have been so sorry for you, for I knew they could not be what you expected, and *one* ——' She did not say more about that one, the saddest of all, but broke

off, and said, 'This was the fourth, was it not? And I think this has been a happy one. Tell me, darling, has it not?'

Annie threw her arms round Miss Allen's neck, and said, 'Oh, I can't think why I never trusted Him before! I can love Him now, and I do. This is the happiest of all the happy days I ever had, and I thought it was going to be such an unhappy one. Oh, Miss Allen, how good the Lord Jesus is!'



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*Tune—Claudia.*

Words by Mrs. Walker.

Music by F. R. H.



Je - sus, I will trust Thee, trust Thee with my soul;



Guil - ty, lost, and help - less, Thou canst make me whole.



There is none in hea - ven or on earth like Thee,



Thou hast died for sin-ners, there-fore, Lord, for me. A-men.

Jesus, I may trust Thee, name of matchless worth !  
 Spoken by the angel at Thy wondrous birth ;  
 Written, and for ever, on Thy cross of shame,  
 Sinners read, and worship, trusting in that name.

Jesus, I must trust Thee, pondering Thy ways :  
 Full of love and mercy, all Thine earthly days,  
 Sinners gathered round Thee, lepers sought Thy face,—  
 None too vile or loathsome for a Saviour's grace.

Jesus, I can trust Thee, trust Thy written word,  
 Though Thy voice of pity I have never heard.  
 When Thy Spirit teacheth, to my taste how sweet !  
 Only may I hearken, sitting at Thy feet !

Jesus, I do trust Thee, trust without a doubt,  
 Whosoever cometh, Thou wilt not cast out !  
 Faithful is Thy promise, precious is Thy blood—  
 These my soul's salvation, Thou my Saviour-God !



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