

gratulations; and there reader, we will leave them.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ABDUCTION OF ESTRELLA IS DISCOVERED.

His childish heart with grief is sore;
And with many a rising tear,
He daily seeks the woodlands o'er,
To find his baby playmate dear.

When Mrs. Miller returned to the room, on the morning of little Estrella's abduction, she found her boxes in a sad state of disarray.

"Oh dear," she murmured, "this is some of baby's work, the mischief loving little kitten;" and she began folding up and replacing the things which Estrella's tiny fingers had scattered. Just at that moment Jamie appeared at the door, asking:

"Mamma, where is Estrella?"

"I do not know, dear." Then her eyes falling on the box from which Estrella's tiny hands had abstracted the bracelet, and fearing she had found it and taken it for a toy, she went to it and after turning the things about in it, and failing to find it, she said:

"Run and find Estrella immediately, Jamie, and bring her to me, for I am afraid she will lose that jewel, and I would not have it misplaced for the world," she continued, speaking to herself as Jamie went off in quest of his little playmate.

"Oh, dear," she murmured as she folded up article after article children are such bothers; and yet," as her eyes fell upon one of Estrella's little dresses, "they are dear, loving, little angels, sent into the world to cheer our homes and hearts; for what would our home be without baby's sweet voice and merry laugh, or Jamie—dear little Jamie's affectionate voice, and loving touch upon my head when it is aching, so sadly? Oh yes, children are blessings; and many of us do not rightly appreciate the sunny treasures, and—"

What else she would have said, was cut short by Jamie, who, putting his curly head in at the door, said:

"Mamma, I have looked every where, and I can't find Estrella, wont you come and help me look?"

"Certainly I will, dear; I cannot see where baby can be;" and Mrs. Miller went out accompanied by Jamie whose usually sunny face now wore a perplexed, and distressed expression. They searched the house and yard in every nook and corner, but no Estrella was found.

"Oh, where can she be?" exclaimed Mrs. Miller pausing at length in her search, and looking about her with a frightened face.

"Oh, mamma! is our baby lost?" cried Jamie, coming close to her side, and raising to

her face his clear, dark eyes, now suffused in tears.

"I do not know, Jamie; I think she is. Run in the house, dear, and tell papa to come out here."

Jamie disappeared, and Mrs. Miller stood anxiously awaiting her husband's coming, with her fears of what might be momentarily increasing. Very soon Doctor Miller made his appearance, anxiously inquiring:

"What is the trouble, Lucy? Anything wrong?"

"Why, yes, John; Estrella is gone—lost, I think, for Jamie and I have searched in every nook and corner, and we cannot find her any where."

"Yonder is the trouble, dear," pointing towards the open gate, so don't magnify your fears, for no doubt the mischievous toad is in the woods. So come on, and let us look, for I have no doubt, that we will find her there."

Saying which, Doctor Miller started for the woods, followed by his wife and little Jamie.

But as the reader already knows, Estrella was not there and, after searching about for full two hours, they at length came to the mossy banks of the little stream, where Estrella had sat down, and slept, and thinking perhaps she might have fallen into the water, they wandered up and down it's banks, but to no effect. At length, with his fears fully aroused, Doctor Miller sent his wife and Jamie off home, and set out himself to collect a crowd of men, so as to institute a general and thorough search. Sad and discouraged, Mrs. Miller went home, hoping for the best, but fearing the worst. The weary hours of suspense rolled by, and at length night came on, bringing back the men, but no sweet, golden haired Estrella. Little Jamie wept as though his heart would break, when his father returned alone and took him up in his arms.

"Oh, John!" exclaimed his wife, tearfully, "what shall we do; and what could have become of her?"

"Alas! Lucy, God only knows," he replied, in a husky voice.

"Oh, papa!" will our baby never come back?" cried Jamie, winding his arms about his father's neck, and weeping afresh.

"I am afraid not, my boy," replied the Doctor, folding the child closer to his heart.

Days, weeks, and then a month went by, and each day that dawned, found Jamie searching the woods for his little playmate.— Oh, Jamie! that tender lamb is cast among the wicked, while thou art still permitted to dwell amid thy friends.

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