

THE RIDE ON THE CLIFF.

LITTLE Janet was tired of the sands. When she first arrived at Sandby-by-the-Sea, she had thought that she could dig and pile up pleasure for ever with her little wooden spade; but even the delight of building sand-castles palls in time. Janet was very weary of it this hot morning. She was tired, too, of making the sea-weed pods go pop; and she couldn't find any shells; and the sea was too far out for her to be able to soak her socks and fill her shoes with gritty, wet sand, by running into it—that is a delight which never palls. All the bathing-machines stood high and dry except one, which had afforded Janet some excitement as it performed its journey over the moist desert to the distant main; but since it gave no signs of coming back, she had grown tired of watching that too. She was tired of trotting to the drawn-up bathing-machines, and inspecting with silently philosophical curiosity the young ladies who lounged, reading, against the wheels, the machine-men and machine-women—who would have been dressed just alike if the men had worn bonnets—and the poor old broken-kneed horses munching in their nose-bags. She was even tired of talking to her old friend the coastguard-man, who was lolling against the canvas-covered gig, and “looking at nothing through a spy-glass,” as Janet said. She thought him very silly for doing so. Presently she heard a “Hi! hi! hi!” and a party of donkey-riders galloped past. That gave a momentary fillip to her spirits—especially because “the big girl” screamed and clutched her donkey round the neck, when he put down his head and flung up his heels. But the big girl was not thrown off, and it was only when they *did* throw somebody off that Janet could take much interest in donkeys now. She had had so many donkey rides that the red-taped white housings had become almost as uninteresting to her as the frayed horse-hair bottoms of the lodging-house chairs. But as Janet languidly watched the donkey party a bright thought suddenly struck her. Back she ran to the rusty old mackerel-boat under whose shade her mamma and her sister were crocheting.

“Mamma!” cried Janet, “you promised me a goat-chaise, and I've never had one yet. Do give me a ride to-day—not on those stupid sands, but ever so far over the cliffs.”

“Well, by and by,” said Mamma.

“Oh, don't say *by and by*—that sounds such a long time off—say *presently*,” Janet persisted. She buzzed about like a blue-bottle until she had made her mamma and sister put their work into their pockets.

“You tiresome little thing! We were so cool and cosy here,” said Sister Bessie, as she prepared to rise. But Sister Bessie's jacket had stuck to the pitch of the perspiring boat, and she had to pull herself off just as if she had been a plaster—greatly to Janet's delight.

“You wouldn't have got yourself in that nice mess, only you *would* come down to the sands when I didn't want to, Bessie,” remarked Janet, with the air of superior wisdom which little girls, when they have the chance, are so fond of assuming towards elder sisters who lecture them.

“You look just like a sheep, Bessie, with that black mark on your back.”

“Little girls should be seen and not heard,” retorted Bessie.

“I'm six next birthday,” was Janet's indignant rejoinder. “You're not so very old. You used to wear pinafores just like me only a little while ago. Little girls must mind what their papas and their mammas say, but they haven't got to mind what sisters say that wear pinafores.”

But just then they reached the Esplanade, and Sister Bessie, for the time, was saved from further tattle.

The fly-horses on the stand twitched their ears and noses, and tried to whisk their tails, as the flies lighted on their quivering skins; the saddled donkeys and the donkeys in the chairs and chaises stood stock-still—in stolid enjoyment of the donkey's heaven, nothing to do, and nobody to wallop him; but some of the harnessed goats seemed inclined to try whether they could not get rid of the load lumbering at their heels by throwing a somerset, and every now and then butted at each other with a dull clash of horns. As soon as Janet was seen, the goat-boys bore down on her.

“No, I shan't have yours,” Janet said to a curly-headed little fellow, whose goat trotted after him like a dog. “Your goat is so fat—he looks as if he was going to sleep. I shall have *this boy's*—*he* knows how to make them do funny things. I don't like boys that are afraid to do funny things.”

“This Boy's” goat did not look nearly so well cared for as That Boy's, but, by pulling