

bright spire till she fell into a dream, and in the morning she would try and try to recollect it all, just as she was wont to do with her lessons; and her mother would wonder to herself what it could be that the child was thinking about, and would be afraid to ask in case it was anything disagreeable, and the telling of it make her still more uncomfortable. And May, who had a tender conscience, was not sure whether it was quite right of her to hide such things from her mother; but then, when she tried to think it all over, it was so strange she was afraid she could never tell it half; and her dreams lay on her conscience and did not let her get better so quickly as she might have done. But the doctor had a notion of his own, and said to May one day that the only thing for her now was to get to the country. The only doctor who could do her the good she needed lived there and nowhere else. She must rise for an hour or two the day after to get strong. So next day, when her mother had lifted her into the arm-chair, so nicely lined with pillows that it looked exactly like a big nest in a tree, May was so overcome with joy that she cried, and when her mamma had dried her tears and kissed her, she felt she must tell about her dream. So she rather suddenly said—

“Mamma, dear, was I ever across the sea in a ship?”

“What makes you think of that, child?” said her mamma, rather taken aback at the sudden question.

“Because I had such a strange dream, and I feel sure, now I’m awake, that it must be very like something that happened once—very long ago, though I was just a baby at the time.”

“Everybody’s dreams are like that sometimes, dear; but you shouldn’t think about it. The doctor says you are to get up every day now, you know, and then you won’t have so much time for dreaming and thinking.”

“Oh, but I’m sure this is real, mamma, and isn’t like any other dream; and it has come to me twice, and both times so much alike, you wouldn’t believe!”

“Well, I hope it was a pleasant dream, May.”

“Yes, it was pleasant,” said May, with a slight pause over the word “pleasant;” “it would have been delightful, if it hadn’t been for the brown cow.”

“The brown cow, May! I don’t understand you.”

“Well, mamma dear, come quite close to me and sit down and listen and I’ll tell you.”

May’s mamma was good and kind, and

she could not refuse to grant the sick child’s wish, so she sat down beside the arm-chair; for though she would much rather have kept May quiet, as you can easily fancy a mother desiring to do at such a time, still she had a notion that perhaps the speaking might be a relief to her, as she found her think-think-thinking so often now, and didn’t know very well what to do with her. So May, by help of her mother’s questions and remarks, managed to tell her dream.

Although she could not say how she got there, she suddenly found herself in a green field with a little stream of water running through it; and there was just one big brown cow in the field, and the cow pursued her whenever she tried to run, and stood stock-still when she stood, and looked at her with such strange black eyes, the breath all the while coming out of her wide nostrils, like smoke. At last May made a great effort to run, and the cow ran too, and suddenly she was nipped up into the arms of a strange man, who carried her till she fell asleep; and when she opened her eyes again, it seemed as if there was nothing but sky all around her, and she was quite alone. She could neither rise nor cry out; but no sooner had the tears started to her eyes, than a man with a face very like Doctor Spurstow’s, and a big head, but oh such a little man, you can’t think, with a blue woollen shirt on, came to her and told her he had something to let her see. Then he went away and came back in a little time, leading the brown cow in a chain, with a bright, three-cornered spot on her forehead, something like the gold top of the spire; and the man made her touch the cow’s head, so soft and sleek, with her hand, and that moment both man and cow were gone, and a tall, pale-faced lady stood in their place, holding a little child in her arms, just able to walk, for there were shoes on the tiny feet. And the lady stooped down, and after speaking very softly in May’s ear and kissing her, she made May kiss the baby, and May saw now that it was very like herself; and suddenly she heard the swish and swirl of water, and felt that she was sailing on the sea; and there came a great noise of feet, though she could see nobody close to her. But looking round at last she caught the brown cow’s eyes staring at her from the opposite side; and the little man with the big head rose up as if he had sprung out of nothing, and took her hand in his, and the cow rose up with the baby laughing on its back, and all at once it went as if with a great splash over the side, and at this little May awoke.