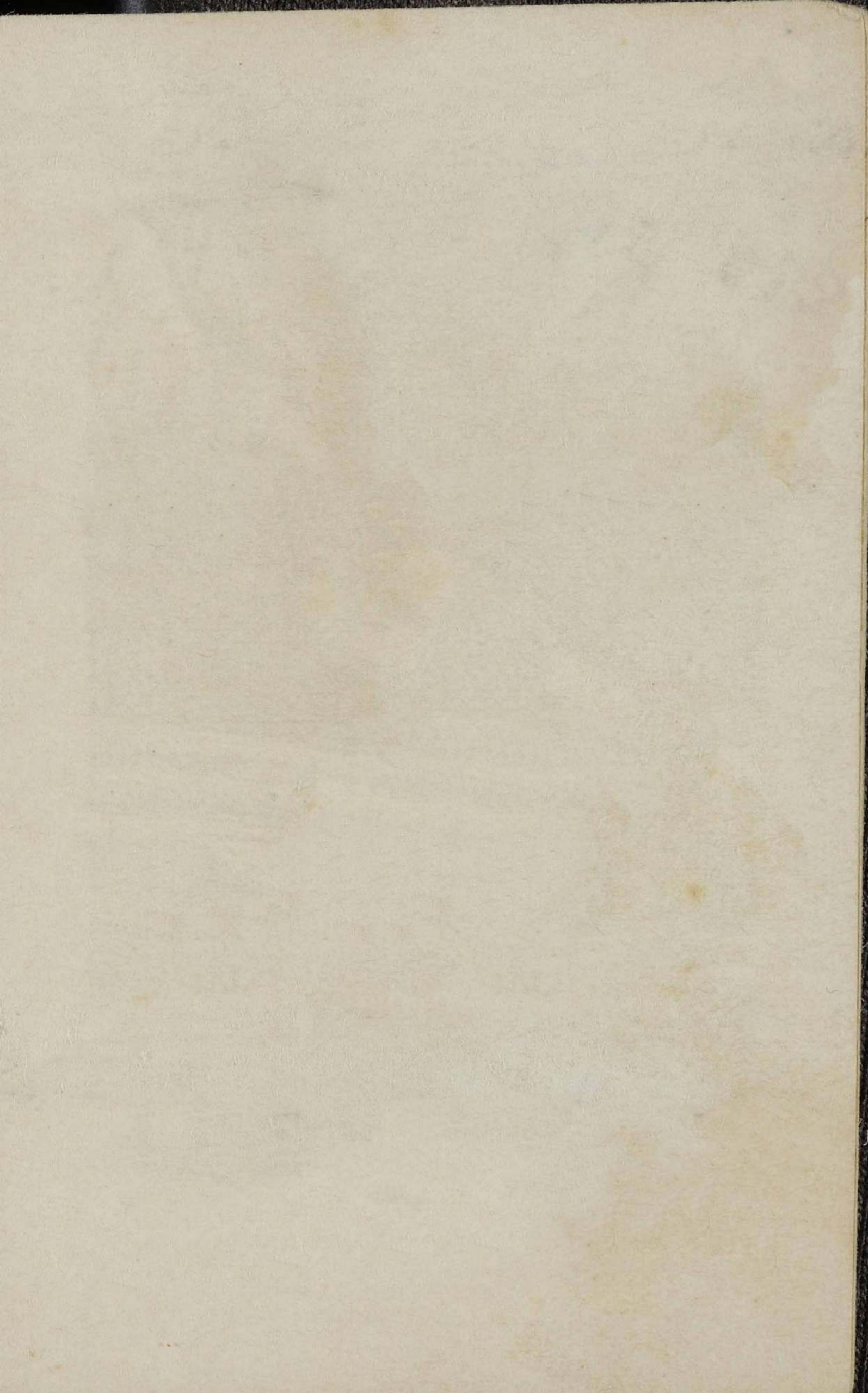




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THE
BASKET
OF
STRAWBERRIES.



NEW YORK:
KIGGINS & KELLOGG,
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THE BASKET

OF

STRAWBERRIES.



ON one of the fine roads which lead from Boston to its many beautiful suburbs, is an agreeable residence, called by its possessor the Hermitage. At the time the following incident occurred, it was early in the year—the season when is gathered the first strawberries which are sold in the city.

Lucy, the daughter of a rich merchant of Boston, the pro-

prietor and occupant of the Hermitage, was sitting, late in the afternoon of a chilly spring day, close by a good fire, in one of the comfortable chairs with which the parlor was furnished. She had been reading, and, becoming sleepy, had dropped into a gentle slumber. She was just dreaming of spending, for a useless ornament for the head, a dollar which her father had that afternoon given her, as a slight reward for some good management on her part in the household economy, when she was suddenly awoke by a cry in the avenue; and, looking out the window, she saw a bareheaded little girl, who had stumbled, and, in saving herself from fall-

ing, had scattered several baskets of strawberries, which she had carried on her head. The tears flowed plentifully down the cheeks of poor Rosetta, for that was the young girl's name. "Oh, my poor mother! you had only these to gain a support. Oh, my poor sick father; what will become of you!"

Her touching words deeply affected the heart of Lucy. "Little girl," said she, beckoning to her, "what were the strawberries worth, the loss of which you so much lament?" "There is only one basketful left uninjured out of six; they were all worth a dollar, and that is more than I could earn in a month! Oh! what will become of my poor parents!"

THE BASKET



W. HOWLAND

“Oh, do not cry,” said Lucy; “give me that one, and take this dollar. You say it is just their value, and how glad I am to make a good use of it.” Rosetta gave the remaining basket, received the money with a grateful and happy heart, and then returned to her parents.

Rosetta's father was in feeble health, confined to the house, where he sat shivering over the scanty fire, while her mother had to avail herself of every honest means that lay in her power, to procure a subsistence; and with Rosetta's assistance, they were barely enabled to live from day to day. And a great assistance she was, for she shrank from no labor, no matter what the



exposure or fatigue attending it might be, providing she by that means made her mother's task lighter, or her father's situation more comfortable. Often could she be seen bringing soft water from a pure stream, some distance from the house, to enable her mother to get through her washing with less labor. Often, on a cold autumn day, when they were suffering from want of fuel, and the chill November wind was finding its way through the many crevices into their ill-protected apartments, rendering their situation still more uncomfortable, she would start out and go a full half-mile to the woods, gather a bundle of sticks from the brushwood and broken branch.



es, and bring them home on her head.

But to return to the Hermitage. Lucy, wishing to keep her good deed a secret, carried the purchased strawberries to

her chamber. Her father had, however, observed all that had passed from his window, and when the light-hearted little girl ran down stairs to her mother, he took the basket of strawberries quietly to his own room. On joining his family in the parlor, he mentioned that he expected a party of friends, with several strangers of distinction, to dine with him on the following day; and desired that nothing should be wanting in the entertainment. After chatting with her parents for some time, Lucy returned to her chamber, to enjoy some of her strawberries, which she expected to find the best she had ever eaten. But alas! they were nowhere to be

found; and the questions she asked of the servants were so indirect that they could not even guess what she referred to. On the following day the company assembled. A most sumptuous dessert was presented. It was composed of every invention of luxury; the most delicious sweetmeats, ices *a l' Italienne*, and pyramids of various fruits. But every one remarked the absence of strawberries, which at this season were rare. Just then a servant entered with Lucy's lost basket, and placed it on a pedestal of flowers which stood in the centre of the table. Full of delighted surprise, she uttered an exclamation of joy, and her face, covered with

blushes, revealed that some mystery was connected with the basket. Her father explained it, adding, "I could not think of offering any other strawberries to my friends; for even a porcelain vase, filled with the most uncommon fruits, could not be compared with the simple basket of Rosetta." Every one warmly commended Lucy, and insisted on her distributing the contents of the basket with her own hands; and when it was emptied, what was her delight and astonishment to find a coral necklace, with a gold locket, set with pearls, on which was engraved, "ROSETTA to her benefactress."

LUCY LUCKLESS.



“OH, what an unfortunate girl I am! Betty has broken my beautiful, large, china pitcher, which father gave me last Christmas, with my name on it, in large gilt letters.”—“I told you yesterday, Lucy, it would happen, if you sent her with it so often to the spring, instead of giving her the stone one.”

“I am so unlucky! the bell is ringing, and I can not find my geography.”

“You left it lying on the table last night, Lucy.”

“My beautiful geranium!” cried Lucy; “the frost has killed it. Anna Mansfield’s is fresh and green—but that is just the way—everything that belongs to me dies or is ruined.” Lucy did not remember that she left her geranium in the piazza all night.

“This is black Monday,” said Lucy; “I was too late for prayers, and father looked angry at me: then I could not find my bag, and was tardy—then one of the girls upset my inkstand on my writing-book, and the dog tore up my exer-

cises ; and I could not take tea at my aunt's, because I had not a dress fit to be seen."

Poor Lucy ! She no doubt is very unhappy ; but if she had risen half an hour earlier, she would have been in time for prayers, and if she had put her bag in a proper place on Saturday, it would have been there on Monday. If her ink-stand had been in its place, it could not have been knocked over. Was the floor a place for her exercises ? If she had attended to her wardrobe on Saturday, before she went to walk, she might have taken tea with her aunt. Oh, how much trouble a little care and regularity would save us !



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