

**LOVE AND LABOUR;
OR, WORK AND ITS
REWARD**

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Love and Labour; Or, Work and Its Reward by Kate Pyer

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KATE PYER

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BY KATE PYER,
AUTHOR OF "PEACE STORIES FOR CHILDREN," ETC.

" Little drops of water,
Little grains of sand,
Make the mighty ocean
And the beauteous land.
Little deeds of kindness,
Little words of love,
Make our earth an Eden,
Like to that above."

LONDON:
THICKBROOM & STAPELTON, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1860.

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CHAPTER I.

THE WANDERER.

"Oh! my clothes are all ragged and tattered and torn,
I wander alone quite unfriended—forsorn;
On my shelterless head the bleak winter winds blow,
And my poor naked feet are benumbed in the snow;
No bright blazing fire, with its comforts, I see,
Surrounded with faces all shining with glee.
Ah! no, the cold street, now deserted and wild,
Is the only home left for the drunkard's child!"



It was the close of a hot summer's day. Evening shadows were creeping gently over the earth, as a troop of boys came rollicking through a dusty lane near the town of D——. Peals of laughter every now and then shook the still air, as some rude jest escaped the lips of one and another, while clouds of dust, raised by the shuffling manner of their tread, on all sides surrounded them. Bunches of wild hedge flowers, or bunches of the ash, elders and oak, were carried in their hands, or swayed to and fro as they passed along. It was easy to see they were returning from a country stroll; one which the confined air of the courts, and crowded rooms of their parents' homes, made all the more pleasant and enjoyable. A turn in the lane brought into view a little girl, sitting on a bank by the road-side, weeping bitterly.

"What are you crying for?" said the foremost of the party. The child looked up with a vacant stare, and burst into a fresh flood of tears.

"Leave the stupid little thing alone," said another

of the boys, "and come along; ain't she got a tongue of her own?"

"Perhaps not, so lend her your'n," said another; and a loud laugh followed this speech, which was intended, or thought to be, a bit of boyish wit.

George Ashton, however, the first speaker, possessing more feeling than some of the others, lingered behind, and going up to the child again spoke—"What's the matter? Won't you tell me why you are crying?"

"Mother have beat me so," sobbed out the child, "so I've run away."

"Where do you live," said George.

"Down Blossom's Court."

"Oh, I know. Here," taking her hand, "I'll lead you home."

"Oh, no, no. I can't, I won't go," screamed out the child, as she tried with all her might to free herself from his grasp.

"But you can't stay here all night, and its getting dark."

"I ain't afraid; mother's so cross, she's worse than the darkness."

Ah! sad admission from the lips of a little child; but to how many a wretched, unmotherly woman