



***MAUD
LINDSAY***

***MOTHER
STORIES***

Maud Lindsay

Mother Stories

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

THE WIND'S WORK

MRS. TABBY GRAY

FLEET WING AND SWEET VOICE

THE LITTLE GIRL WITH THE LIGHT

THE LITTLE GRAY PONY

HOW THE HOME WAS BUILT

THE LITTLE TRAVELER

THE OPEN GATE

INSIDE THE GARDEN GATE

PART I.

PART II.

PART III.

PART IV.

THE JOURNEY

The GIANT ENERGY & The FAIRY SKILL

THE SEARCH FOR A GOOD CHILD

THE CLOSING DOOR

THE MINSTREL'S SONG

DUST UNDER THE RUG

THE STORY OF GRETCHEN

THE KING'S BIRTHDAY

PREFACE

Table of Contents

I have endeavored to write, for mothers and dear little children, a few simple stories, embodying some of the truths of Froebel's Mother Play.

The Mother Play is such a vast treasure house of Truth, that each one who seeks among its stores may bring to light some gem; and though, perhaps, I have missed its diamonds and rubies, I trust my string of pearls may find acceptance with some mother who is trying to live with her children.

I have written my own mottoes, with a few exceptions, that I might emphasize the particular lesson which I endeavor to teach in the story; for every motto in the Mother Play comprehends so much that it is impossible to use the whole for a single subject. From "The Bridge" for instance, which is replete with lessons, I have taken only one,—for the story of the "Little Traveler."

Most of these stories have been told and retold to little children, and are surrounded, in my eyes, by a halo of listening faces.

"Mrs. Tabby Gray" is founded on a true story of a favorite cat. "The Journey" is a new version of the old Stage Coach game, much loved by our grandmothers; and I am indebted to some old story, read in childhood, for the suggestion of "Dust Under the Rug," which was a successful experiment in a kindergarten to test the possibility of interesting little children in a story after the order of Grimm, with the wicked stepmother and her violent daughter eradicated.

Elizabeth Peabody says we are all free to look out of each other's windows; and so I place mine at the service of all who care to see what its tiny panes command.

Maud Lindsay.

THE WIND'S WORK

[Table of Contents](#)

MOTTO FOR THE MOTHER

*Power invisible that God reveals,
The child within all nature feels,
Like the great wind that unseen goes,
Yet helps the world's work as it blows.*

One morning Jan waked up very early, and the first thing he saw when he opened his eyes was his great kite in the corner. His big brother had made it for him; and it had a smiling face, and a long tail that reached from the bed to the fireplace. It did not smile at Jan that morning though, but looked very sorrowful and seemed to say "Why was I made? Not to stand in a corner, I hope!" for it had been finished for two whole days and not a breeze had blown to carry it up like a bird in the air.

Jan jumped out of bed, dressed himself, and ran to the door to see if the windmill on the hill was at work; for he hoped that the wind had come in the night. But the mill was silent and its arms stood still. Not even a leaf turned over in the yard.

The windmill stood on a high hill where all the people could see it, and when its long arms went whirling around every one knew that there was no danger of being hungry, for then the Miller was busy from morn to night grinding the grain that the farmers brought him.

When Jan looked out, however, the Miller had nothing to do, and was standing in his doorway, watching the clouds, and saying to himself (though Jan could not hear him):—

*"Oh! how I wish the wind would blow
So that my windmill's sails might go,
To turn my heavy millstones round!
For corn and wheat must both be ground,
And how to grind I do not know
Unless the merry wind will blow."*

He sighed as he spoke, for he looked down in the village, and saw the Baker in neat cap and apron, standing idle too.

The Baker's ovens were cold, and his trays were clean, and he, too, was watching the sky, and saying:—

*"Oh! how I wish the wind would blow,
So that the Miller's mill might go,
And grind me flour so fine, to make
My good light bread and good sweet cake!
But how to bake I do not know
Without the flour as white as snow."*

Jan heard every word that the Baker said, for he lived next door to him; and he felt so sorry for his good neighbor that he wanted to tell him so. But before he had time to speak, somebody else called out from across the street:—

*"Well! I'm sure I wish the wind would blow,
For this is washing day, you know.
I've scrubbed and rubbed with all my might,
In tubs of foam from morning light,
And now I want the wind to blow
To dry my clothes as white as snow."*

This was the Washerwoman who was hanging out her clothes. Jan could see his own Sunday shirt, with ruffles, hanging limp on her line, and it was as white as a snowflake, sure enough!

"Come over, little neighbor," cried the Washerwoman, when she saw Jan. "Come over, little neighbor, and help me work to-day!" So, as soon as Jan had eaten his breakfast, he ran over to carry her basket for her. The basket was heavy, but he did not care; and as he worked he heard some one singing a song, with a voice almost as loud and as strong as the wind.

*[1]"Oh! if the merry wind would blow,
Yeo ho! lads, ho! yeo ho! yeo ho!
My gallant ship would gaily go,
Yeo ho! lads, ho! yeo ho!
In fresh'ning gales we'd loose our sails,
And o'er the sea,
Where blue waves dance, and sunbeams
glance,
We'd sail in glee,
But winds must blow, before we go,
Across the sea,
Yeo ho! my lads, yeo ho!"*

Jan and the Washerwoman and all the neighbors looked out to see who was singing so cheerily, and it was the Sea-captain whose white ship Jan had watched in the harbor. The ship was laden with linen and laces for fine ladies, but it could not go till the wind blew. The Captain was impatient to be off, and so he walked about town, singing his jolly song to keep himself happy.

Jan thought it was a beautiful song, and when he went home he tried to sing it himself. He did not know all the words, but he put his hands in his pockets and swelled out his little chest and sang in as big a voice as he could: "Yeo ho! my lads, yeo ho!"

While he sang, something kissed him on the cheek; and when he turned to see what it was his hat spun off into the yard as if it were enchanted; and when he ran to pick his hat up he heard a whispering all through the town. He looked up, and he looked down, and on every side, but saw nobody! At last the golden weather-vane on the church tower called down:—

"Foolish child, it is the wind from out of the east."

The trees had been the first to know of its coming, and they were bowing and bending to welcome it; while the leaves danced off the branches and down the hill, in a whirl of delight.

The windmill's arms whirled round, oh! so fast, and the wheat was ground into white flour for the Baker, who kindled his fires and beat his eggs in the twinkling of an eye; and he was not quicker than the Sea-captain, who loosed his sails in the fresh'ning gales, just as he had said he would, and sailed away to foreign lands.

Jan watched him go, and then ran in great haste to get his kite; for the petticoats on the Washerwoman's clothesline were puffed up like balloons, and all the world was astir.

"Now I'm in my proper place," said the kite as it sailed over the roofs of the houses, over the tree tops, over the golden weather vane, and even over the windmill itself. Higher, higher, higher it flew, as if it had wings; till it slipped away from the string, and Jan never saw it again, and only the wind knew where it landed at last.



**"Now I am in my proper place," said
the Kite.**

MRS. TABBY GRAY

[Table of Contents](#)

MOTTO FOR THE MOTHER

*"All mother love attracts the child,
Its world-wide tenderness he feels.
And ev'ry beast that loves her young,
His mother's love to him reveals."*

Mrs. Tabby Gray, with her three little kittens, lived out in the barn where the hay was stored. One of the kittens was white, one was black, and one gray, just like her mother, who was called Tabby Gray from the color of her coat.

These three little kittens opened their eyes when they grew old enough, and thought there was nothing so nice in all this wonderful world as their own dear mother, although she told them of a great many nice things, like milk and bread, which they should have when they could go up to the big house where she had her breakfast, dinner, and supper.

Every time Mother Tabby came from the big house she had something pleasant to tell. "Bones for dinner to-day, my dears," she would say, or "I had a fine romp with a ball and the baby," until the kittens longed for the time when they could go too.

One day, however, Mother Cat walked in with joyful news.

"I have found an elegant new home for you," she said, "in a very large trunk where some old clothes are kept; and I think I had better move at once."

Then she picked up the small black kitten, without any more words, and walked right out of the barn with him.

The black kitten was astonished, but he blinked his eyes at the bright sunshine, and tried to see everything.

Out in the barnyard there was a great noise, for the white hen had laid an egg, and wanted everybody to know it; but