

## The Rainbow, After the Thunder-storm

by Anonymous

Julia and her mamma resided chiefly in London. Owing to indisposition the family were a little way from home for the benefit of the air. In consequence of that, Julia and her mamma were frequently walking out. One summer's evening they had extended their walk to an unusual length, when suddenly the clouds gathered, and distant thunder indicated an approaching storm. They were a great way from any house, but hurried to the nearest one for shelter. It was a large brick-built house, with a court-yard, inclosed by a high wall. At the iron gate was a servant, with a pitcher in her hand, taking some milk of a man who stood by. Julia's mamma went up to her, and said, "Will you be so obliging as to let us have a shelter from the storm? It appears likely to be very severe." The servant replied, "I am very sorry, ma'am, but it is not in my power; my master and mistress are not at home, and they have given me orders not to admit any stranger."

There was no time to hesitate; immediately they proceeded to an unfinished house they recollected to have seen; it was a quarter of a mile distant. Almost breathless with fatigue, they arrived; the wash-house door was standing open, they entered, and thought themselves happy in having so good a shelter. "Oh," said Julia, "how cruel it was in that young woman to refuse to let us go into the house! I would not have done so." "Then," replied her mamma, "you would have done wrong; however painful it must have been to her, to refuse was no more than her duty as a faithful servant."

Every minute the lightning became more vivid, and the thunder appeared to be bursting over their heads. "Oh, mamma," said Julia, "how awful this is!" "Yes, it is indeed, my dear," said her mamma; "God thundereth marvellously with his voice; great wonders doeth he, which we cannot comprehend." "This is a storm," remarked Julia, "such as I never remember before. Hark! how it thunders. Oh, what a dreadful flash of lightning! Oh, the thunder! It gets worse; how shall I bear it! Hide me, hide me, my dear mamma; let me get into some dark place." "My dear love," said her mamma, "you surprise me to see you so alarmed; it is what I did not expect; don't give way to fear; *I* cannot hide you from this storm any more than I can hide you from the presence of God; and that you are sure I cannot do. Be composed, my love, and let each of us say—

'Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,  
Till the storm of life is past;  
Safe into the haven guide,  
O receive my soul at last!'

Our father sits at the helm; he will guide the storm, and I shall say to you as our Lord said to his disciples when *they* were in a storm, and as he says to us now in his word, "Why are ye so fearful, have ye no faith?" Let us put our trust in *him*, and look for our protection from *him*. How much tenderness was there in our Lord's words! He did not blame them much for their fears, but kindly reminded them that it was their duty to trust in God. You are not like your little brother when *he* was about four years old. I was out with him when it thundered, and he said, 'Don't be afraid mamma; if we love God, nothing can hurt us.'

"It makes me tremble so much," said Julia. "If a storm like this is so awful, my dear," said her mamma, "what must the second coming of Christ be, when the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and all the works that are therein shall he burned up! How will the sinner tremble, and

call to the mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the lamb!' Now we need not try to hide ourselves, but if we love the Saviour, may say—

'This awful God is ours,  
Our father, and our love.'

"I think the thunder is more distant," continued her mamma, "and does not succeed the lightning so soon." "Does that make any difference?" asked Julia. "It proves, my dear," answered her mamma, "that the cloud is going from us; but I observed you were more afraid of the thunder than of the lightning; when you hear the thunder, the danger is over. It is only the *lightning* that is fatal. When we have seen the lightning, but have not been touched by it, and when the thunder does not come immediately after it, it is foolish to turn pale and tremble at a sound which is not dangerous. After the flash of lightning is over, we may securely wait for the clap of thunder; it is as harmless as the sound of a cannon. The thunder tells us we have escaped the danger, and at the same time informs us at what distance; for the greater space of time there has been between the flash of lightning and the thunder, the more distant the storm."

Julia's mamma proceeded, "I heard a poor woman once say she thought God was angry with the people, and had sent a storm to punish them. That is, however, a very ignorant way of talking. Storms are a blessing, and we ought to be thankful for them; and though we know they sometimes do hurt, and a few lives are lost, yet how few compared with what might be expected! Out of seven hundred and fifty thousand persons who died in the space of thirty years in London, there were only two killed by lightning. Probably if there were no storms, the air would be so impure, that men and other living creatures would perish by millions. Let us, my dear, lift up our hearts in gratitude to the Almighty, who, though he sometimes shows us his grandeur and his glory in this manner, yet always displays more of *mercy* than of *judgment*. After all, God has more glory and greatness than he shows to us; what, then, will be the manifestations of them, when in another world we see him face to face! Yet what we shall behold of him there will fill us with *delight*, and not *terror*, as I heard you singing the other day, my dear—

'Millions of years my wond'ring eyes  
Shall o'er thy beauties rove,  
And endless ages I'll adore  
The glories of thy love.

Sweet Jesus! ev'ry smile of thine  
Shall fresh endearments bring,  
And thousand tastes of new delight  
From all thy graces spring.'

May we be prepared for that period, and enjoy all that blessedness described in those beautiful lines! There, my dear, will be no storms, and we shall have no fear." "I thank you, my dear mamma, for talking so to me," said Julia; "I have not felt so much fear since you began."

The rain had nearly ceased, and the storm was gone. Julia and her mamma were glad to prepare for going home. As soon as they entered the field leading to their home, Julia remarked how refreshed every thing appeared. "Yes," said her mamma, "nature never appears more lovely than after a Thunder-storm. The herbage of the field is revived, and what before was fading is refreshed. All animals seem to

rejoice; birds are coming from their shelter, and are singing delightfully, though it is nearly their time for rest; and the cattle share in the general pleasure. See those two lambs, how prettily they are playing!"

It was at this moment Julia looked around to admire the scenery, and beheld a Rainbow. "Look, look!" she said, "mamma, what a beautiful Rainbow! How wide it spreads! How many colours are there? Let me count them. One, two, three, four, five—" "My dear," said her mamma, "there are seven, and in the following order: *red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, and violet*. These colours appear so much the more lively, according as the cloud behind is darker, and the drops of rain fall the closer. The Rainbow can last only while the rain continues. The sun must be behind us, and the rain opposite to us. The sun and rain must appear at the same time in order to form a Rainbow. It is caused by the rays of the sun reflected on drops of water, and is a picture the most beautifully coloured of any the Creator has given to us. The nearer the sun is to setting, the wider the arch extends. When the sun is at its greatest height, the bow appears the smallest.

"Where do we read, my dear, in the Bible about the Rainbow?" asked Julia's mamma. "I think, mamma," replied Julia, "it was to Noah as a sign the world should not again be destroyed by water, and we read so in the book of Genesis." "Yes," answered her mamma, "my dear, you are right. How very fearful would Noah and his family have been whenever they saw dark clouds arise and an appearance of much rain, if God had not kindly said what he intended by the Rainbow! But he explained it by saying, 'I do set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between me and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth!'"

"A bow bespeaks terror; but this has neither string nor arrow; it is an emblem of peace. If it had not been said that it was a token to all generations, even *we* should have feared a deluge whenever a storm approached. How must Noah have felt when he and his family left the ark, and not a vestige of any thing remained they had seen before! For the waters had covered the highest mountains, and had risen fifteen cubits higher; that is, seven yards and a half; so that in vain would salvation have been hoped for from the hills and mountains. What was Noah's conduct on leaving the ark? He did not forget (as many do) the mercies of God which he had received. The first thing he did was to build an altar for the worship of God. One would have thought, so dreary as every thing must have appeared, his first care would have been to build a house for himself and family, warm and sheltered as they had been in the ark. But no; Noah *feared* God, and therefore his first care was to *serve* him.

"May it be so, my dear, with *you*," continued Julia's mamma. "May *you* seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto you! Noah's worship was accepted, and immediately God said unto him, I will no more destroy the world with a flood. What kindness is here shown! I think, my love, it is time we hastened home."

When they arrived at their abode, as Julia's papa was not expected that night, her mamma, according to her usual practice in his absence, rang the bell for the servants to attend family worship; and a large family bible being laid on the table, her mamma, with great solemnity, read the twenty-ninth Psalm, which being done, all kneeled, and she, in a sweet, feeling manner, approached the throne of Mercy. When prayer was over, all rose from their knees; Julia kissed her mamma, and took her leave of her for the night. "Good night, my dear," said her mamma; "don't forget to pray in secret before you close your eyes for sleep. Adieu! dear Julia;

'May angels guard thy head,

And through the hours of darkness keep  
Their watch around thy bed!"

I hope, my dear young reader, you will consider what Julia's mamma said to her for *her* instructions and comfort about the Storm and the Rainbow is here mentioned for *your* instruction and comfort too on such occasions. Only fear God, and you need not fear any thing else.

How dreadful to hear in the sky  
The thunder so long and so loud!  
To witness the fork'd lightnings fly,  
Discharged from yonder black cloud!  
Lord, mercy on me do bestow,  
And show me the peaceful Rainbow!

In vain to shelters do I run,  
If I find no shelter in Thee;  
No threat'ning dangers can I shun,  
[16]But as Thou art gracious to me.  
Thou can'st hush my fears I well know,  
By showing the peaceful Rainbow.

That tells me the storm shall soon end,  
The earth shall be delug'd no more,  
That God is my father and friend,  
Whose love is great as his power.  
His signal to creatures below  
Is the peaceful, lovely Rainbow.

This bow is not bent by a string,  
Because the anger is all fled;  
Nor has it an arrow to fling,  
So that I have nothing to dread.  
And God now would have me to know,  
All is *mercy* in the Rainbow.

In future, then, when I'm afraid,  
And darkness and storms fill the air,  
I will think that God who them made,  
Views me as a child of his care;  
That storms will soon cease from below,  
And the sky display the Rainbow.

Source:

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