

Marx Hardy Machiavelli Joyce Austen  
Defoe Abbot Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo  
Stoker Wilde Christie Maupassant Haggard Chesterton Molière Eliot Grimm  
Garnett Engels Schiller Byron Maupassant  
Goethe Hawthorne Smith Kafka  
Cotton Dostoyevsky Kipling Doyle  
Baum Henry Flaubert Nietzsche Willis  
Leslie Dumas Stockton Vatsyayana Crane  
Burroughs Verne  
Curtis Tocqueville Gogol Busch  
Homer Tolstoy Whitman Twain  
Darwin Zola Lawrence Dickens Plato  
Potter Freud Jowett Stevenson Andersen Harte  
Kant London Descartes Cervantes Burton Hesse  
Poe Aristotle Wells Voltaire Cooke  
Hale James Hastings Shakespeare Irving  
Bunner Richter Chekhov da Shakespeare  
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Swift Pushkin Alcott  
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# **Holidays at Roselands**

Martha Finley

# Imprint

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"Hope not sunshine every hour,  
Fear not clouds will always lower."

—Burns.



## CHAPTER I.

"Oh Truth,  
Thou art, whilst tenant in a noble breast,  
A crown of crystal in an iv'ry chest."

Elsie felt in better spirits in the morning; her sleep had refreshed her, and she arose with a stronger confidence in the love of both her earthly and her heavenly Father.

She found her papa ready, and waiting for her. He took her in his arms and kissed her tenderly. "My precious little daughter," he said, "papa is very glad to see you looking so bright and cheerful this morning. I think something was wrong with my little girl last night. Why did she not come to papa with her trouble?"

"*Why* did you think I was in trouble, papa?" she asked, hiding her face on his breast.

"How could I think otherwise, when my little girl did not come to bid me good night, though she had not seen me since dinner; and when I went to give her a good-night kiss I found her pillow wet, and a tear on her cheek?"

"*Did* you come, papa?" she asked, looking up in glad surprise.

"I did. Now tell me what troubled you, my own one?"

"I am afraid you will be angry with me, papa," she said, almost under her breath.

"Not half so angry as if you refuse to give me your confidence. I would be glad to know that my little daughter had not a single thought or feeling concealed from me."

He paused a moment, looking down at the little blushing face, half hidden on his breast, then went on:

"Elsie, daughter, you are more precious to me than aught else in the wide world, and you need not fear that any other can ever take your place in my heart, or that I will make any connection that would render you unhappy. I want no one to love but my little girl; and you must not let the gossip of the servants disturb you."

Elsie looked up in unfeigned astonishment.

"Papa! you seem to know everything about me. Can you read my thoughts?"

"*Almost*, when I can see your face," he answered, smiling at her puzzled look. "I cannot quite, though; but I can put things together and make a pretty good guess, sometimes."

She lay still on his breast for a moment; then, raising her eyes timidly to his face again, she said in a half-hesitating way, "I am afraid it is very naughty in me, papa, but I can't help thinking that Miss Stevens is very disagreeable. I felt so that very first day, and I did not want to take a present from her, because it didn't seem exactly right when I didn't like her, but I couldn't refuse—she wouldn't let me—and I have tried to like her since, but I can't."

"Well, darling, I don't think I am just the proper person to reprove you for *that*," he replied, trying to look grave, "for I am afraid I am as naughty as you are. But we won't talk any more about her. See what I have for you this morning."

He pointed to the table, where lay a pile of prettily bound books, which Elsie had not noticed until this moment. They were Abbot's works. Elsie had read several of his historical tales, and liked them very much; and her father could hardly have given a more acceptable present.

"I was sorry for your disappointment yesterday," he said, "but I hope these will make up for it, and they will give you a great deal of useful information, as well as amusement; while it could only be an injury to you to read that trashy book."

Elsie was turning over the books with eager delight.

"*Dear* papa, you are so kind and good to me," she said, laying them down to put her arms around his neck and kiss him. "I like

these books very much, and I don't at all care to read that other one since you have told me you do not approve of it."

"That is my own darling child," said he, returning her caress, "your ready obedience deserved a reward. Now put on your hat, and we will take our walk."

Mr. Travilla joined them in the avenue, and his kind heart rejoiced to see how the clouds of care and sorrow had all passed away from his little friend's face, leaving it bright and beaming, as usual. Her father had one hand, and Mr. Travilla soon possessed himself of the other.

"I don't altogether like these company-days, when you have to be banished from the table, little Elsie," he remarked. "I cannot half enjoy my breakfast without your bright face to look at."

"I don't like them either, Mr. Travilla, because I see so little of papa. I haven't had a ride with him since the company came."

"You shall have one this afternoon, if nothing happens," said her father quickly. "What do you say, Travilla, to a ride on horseback with the four young ladies you took charge of yesterday, and myself?"

"Bravo! I shall be delighted to be of the party, if the ladies don't object; eh! Elsie, what do you think?" with a questioning look down into her glad face, "will they want me?"

"You needn't be a bit afraid, Mr. Travilla," laughed the little girl; "I like you next to papa, and I believe Lucy and the rest like you better."

"Oh! take care, Elsie; are you not afraid of hurting his feelings?"

"No danger, as long as *she* puts me first," Mr. Dinsmore said, bestowing a smile and loving glance on her.

Caroline Howard was in Elsie's room, waiting to show her bracelet, which had just been handed to her by her maid; Pomp having brought it from the city late the night before.

"Oh! Elsie, I am so glad you have come at last. I have been waiting for half an hour, I should think, to show you these," she said, as

Elsie came in from her walk. "But how bright and merry you look; so different from last night! what ailed you then?"

"Never mind," replied Elsie, taking the bracelet from her hand, and examining it. "Oh! this is *very* pretty, Carry! the clasp is so beautiful, and they have braided the hair so nicely."

"Yes, I'm sure mamma will like it. But now that Christmas is gone, I think I will keep it for a New Year's gift. Wouldn't you, Elsie?"

"Yes, perhaps—but I want to tell you, Carry, what papa says. He and Mr. Travilla are going to take you, and Lucy, and Mary, and me, riding on horseback this afternoon. Don't you think it will be pleasant?"

"Oh, it will be *grand!*" exclaimed Carry. "Elsie, I think now that your papa is very kind; and do you know I like him very much, indeed; quite as well as I do Mr. Travilla, and I always liked *him*—he's so pleasant, and so funny, too, sometimes. But I must go and show my bracelet to Lucy. Hark! no, there's the bell, and I'll just leave it here until after breakfast."

Elsie opened a drawer and laid it carefully in, and they ran off to the nursery.

"Elsie," said her father, when they had finished the morning lessons, "there is to be a children's party to-night, at Mr. Carleton's, and I have an invitation for you. Would you like to go?"

"Do you wish me to go, papa?" she asked.

"Not unless *you* wish to do so, daughter," he said kindly. "I cannot go with you, as there are to be none but little people, and I never feel altogether comfortable in seeing my darling go from home without me; and you will, no doubt, be very late in returning and getting to bed, and I fear will feel badly to-morrow in consequence; but this once, at least, you shall just please yourself. All your little guests are going, and it would be dull and lonesome for you at home, I am afraid."

Elsie thought a moment.

"Dear papa, you are very kind," she said, "but if you please, I would much rather have you decide for me, because I am only a silly little girl, and you are so much older and wiser."

He smiled, and stroked her hair softly, but said nothing.

"Are you going to stay at home, papa?" she asked presently.

"Yes, daughter, I expect to spend the evening either in this room or the library, as I have letters to write."

"Oh, then, papa, please let me stay with you! I would like it *much* better than going to the party; will you, papa? please say yes."

"But you know I cannot talk to you, or let you talk; so that it will be very dull," he said, pushing back the curls from the fair forehead, and smiling down into the eager little face.

"Oh! but if you will only let me sit beside you and read one of my new books, I shall be quite contented, and sit as quiet as a little mouse, and not say one word without leave. Mayn't I, papa?"

"I said you should do as you pleased, darling, and I always love to have my pet near me."

"Oh, then I shall stay!" she cried, clapping her hands.

Then, with a happy little sigh, "It will be so nice," she said, "to have one of our quiet evenings again." And she knew, by her father's gratified look, that she had decided as he would have had her.

A servant put his head in at the door.

"Massa Horace, dere's a gen'leman in de library axin for to see you."

"Very well, Jim, tell him I will be there in a moment. Elsie, dear, put away your books, and go down to your little friends."

"Yes, papa, I will," she replied, as he went out and left her.

"How kind papa is to me, and how I do love him!" she murmured to herself as she placed the books carefully in the drawer where they belonged.

She found Lucy and Mary busily engaged in dressing a doll, and Carry deeply interested in a book. But several of the little ones were looking quite disconsolate.

"Oh, Elsie, do come and play with us," said Flora; "Enna won't play anything we like. We've been playing keeping house, but Enna will be mother all the time, and she scolds and whips us so much that we are all tired of it."

"Well, what shall we play?" asked Elsie, good-naturedly. "Will you build houses?"

"No, I'm tired of that, because Enna takes all the blocks," said another little girl. "She isn't at all polite to visitors, is she, Flora?"

"No," replied Flora, "and I don't *ever* mean to come to see her again."

"I don't care," retorted Enna, angrily, "and I don't take *all* the blocks, either."

"Well, *most* all, you do," said the other, "and it isn't polite."

"They're mine, and I'll have as many as I want; and I don't care if it *isn't* polite," Enna answered, with a pout that by no means improved her appearance.

"Will you play 'O sister, O Phebe?'" asked Elsie.

"No, no!" cried several little voices, "Enna always wants to be in the middle; and besides, Arthur always wants to play, and he will kiss us; and we don't like it."

Elsie was almost in despair; but Herbert, who was lying on a sofa, reading, suddenly shut his book, saying, "I tell you what, Elsie! tell us one of those nice fairy stories we all like so much!"

"Yes, do, do!" cried several of the little ones, clapping their hands.

So Elsie drew up a stool close to Herbert's sofa, and the little ones clustered around her, Enna insisting on having the best place for hearing; and for more than an hour she kept them quiet and interested; but was very glad when at last the maid came to take them out walking, thus leaving her at liberty to follow her own inclination.

"What are you going to do now, Elsie?" asked Caroline, closing her book.

"I am going down to the drawing-room to ask Aunt Adelaide to show me how to crochet this mitten for mammy," Elsie answered.

"Won't you come along, girls?"

"Yes, let's take our sewing down there," said Lucy, gathering up the bits of muslin and silk, and putting them in her work-box.

Elsie glanced hastily around as they entered, and gave a satisfied little sigh on perceiving that Miss Stevens was not in the room, and that her Aunt Adelaide was seated with her embroidery near one of the windows, while her papa sat near by, reading the morning paper.

The little girls soon established themselves in a group on the opposite side of Miss Adelaide's window, and she very good-naturedly gave Elsie the assistance she needed.

"Elsie," said Lucy, presently, in an undertone, "Carry has been showing us her bracelet, and I think it is beautiful; she won't tell whose hair it is—I guess it's her sister's, maybe—but I'm sure yours would make just as pretty a bracelet, and I want one for my mamma; won't you give me one of your curls to make it? you have so many that one would never be missed."

"No, Miss Lucy," said Mr. Dinsmore, looking at them over his paper, "you can't have one of my curls; I can't spare it."

"I don't want one of *your* curls, Mr. Dinsmore," laughed Lucy, merrily. "I didn't ask for it. Your hair is very pretty, too, but it would be quite too short."

"I beg your pardon, Miss Lucy, if my ears deceived me," said he, with mock gravity, "but I was quite certain I heard you asking for one of my curls. Perhaps, though, you are not aware of the fact that my curls grow on two heads."

"I don't know what you mean, Mr. Dinsmore," replied Lucy, laughing again, "but it was one of Elsie's curls I asked for."

"Elsie doesn't own any," said he; "they all belong to me. I let her wear them, to be sure, but that is all; she has no right to give them away."

He turned to his paper again, and Elsie bent over her work, her face flushed, and her little hand trembling so that she could scarcely hold her needle.

"I'm afraid I ought to tell papa," she thought, "that I did give one of my curls away. I never thought about his caring, but I might have known, because when I wanted my hair cut last summer, he said they shouldn't one of them be touched. Oh! dear, why didn't I think of that? I am afraid he will be very much displeased."

"Don't tell him, then," whispered the tempter, "he is not likely ever to miss it."

"Nay, but it would be *wrong* to hide your fault," said conscience.

"I *will* tell him," she resolved.

"Wait till to-morrow, then," whispered the tempter again; "if you tell him now, very likely he will deprive you of your ride this afternoon, as a punishment."

So the struggle went on in the little breast while others were chatting and laughing around her, never suspecting what a battle the little girl was fighting within her own heart.

Presently Lucy jumped up. "Oh! I am so tired sewing; come, girls, let's put on our things, and take a run in the garden."

Carry and Mary readily assented.

"I must speak to papa first," Elsie said in a half whisper, "but don't wait for me."

She had spoken low, but not so low that his quick ear did not catch the sound. He had heard her, and laying his paper down on his knee, as the other little girls ran away, he turned half round and held out his hand, asking, with a smile, "Well, daughter, what is it? what have you to say to papa?"

She went to him at once, and he was surprised to see how she was trembling, and that her cheeks were flushed and her eyes full of tears.

"Why! what ails my darling?" he asked tenderly.

Adelaide had left the room a moment before, and there was no one near enough to hear.

"Please, papa, don't be very angry with me," she pleaded, speaking very low and hesitatingly. "I did not know you cared about my curls; I did not think about their belonging to you, and I did give one to Carry."

He was silent a moment, evidently surprised at her confession; then he said gently, "No, dearest, I will not be angry this time, and I feel sure you will not do so again, now you know that I *do* care."

"No, *indeed*, I will not, dear papa," she replied in a tone of intense relief. "But you are not going to punish me?" she asked, beginning to tremble again. "I was *so* afraid to tell you, lest you would say I should not have my ride this afternoon."

"Why, then, did you not put off your confession until after the ride?" he asked, looking searchingly into her face.

"I wanted to very much, papa," she said, looking down and blushing deeply, "but I knew it would be very wrong."

"My dear, conscientious little daughter," he said, taking her on his knee, "your father loves you better than ever for this new proof of your honesty and truthfulness. Deprive you of your ride? no, indeed, I feel far more like rewarding than punishing you. Ah! I had forgotten! I have something for you;" and he put his hand into his pocket and brought out a letter.

"Oh! it is from Miss Rose! dear, darling Miss Rose!" was Elsie's joyful exclamation, as he put it in her hand.

She made a movement as if to get down from his knee, but he detained her.

"Sit still and read it here, darling," he said, "I love to have you on my knee, and if there are any hard places I can help you."

"Thank you, papa; sometimes there are hard places – at least pretty hard for a little girl like me – though I think Miss Rose tries to write plainly because she knows that I cannot read writing as well as big people can."

She was eagerly tearing off the envelope while she answered him, and then settling herself comfortably she began to read.

He watched with deep interest the varying expression of her fine open countenance as she read. Once or twice she asked him to tell her a word, but the most of it she got through without any difficulty.

At last she had finished.

"It is such a nice letter, papa," she said as she folded it up, "and so good of Miss Rose to write to me again so soon."

"Are you not going to let *me* enjoy it, too?" he asked.

She put it into his hand instantly, saying, with a blush, "I did not know you would care to read it, papa."

"I am interested in all that gives either pleasure or pain to my little girl," he answered gently. "I wish to be a sharer in all her joys and sorrows."

Elsie watched him while he read, almost as intently as he had watched her; for she was anxious that he should be pleased with Miss Rose's letter.

It was a cheerful, pleasant letter, well suited to interest a child of Elsie's years; giving an account of home scenes; telling of her little brothers and sisters, their love for each other; the little gifts they had prepared in anticipation of Christmas, etc., etc.

At the close she made some allusion to Elsie's letters, and expressed her heartfelt sympathy in her little friend's happiness.

"I am so glad, my darling," she wrote, "that your father now loves you so dearly, and that you are so happy in his love. My heart ached for you in the bitter disappointment of your first meeting with him. It is true you never said that you were disappointed, but there was a tone of deep sadness in your dear little letter, the cause of which I—who knew so well how you had looked and longed for his return, and how your little heart yearned for his affection—could not fail to guess. But, dear child, while you thus rejoice in an *earthly* father's love, do not forget that you have a Father in Heaven, who claims the *first* place in your heart; and who is the giver of every good gift, not even excepting the precious love that now

makes your young life so bright and happy. Keep close to Jesus, dear Elsie: His is the only *truly satisfying* love—the only one we can be certain will never fail us."

"Is it not a nice letter, papa?" asked the little girl, as he refolded and gave it to her again.

"Very nice, daughter," he answered, in an absent way. He looked very grave, and Elsie studied his countenance intently while, for some moments, he sat with his eyes bent thoughtfully upon the carpet. She feared that something in the letter had displeased him. But presently he looked at her with his usual affectionate smile, and laying his hand caressingly on her head, said, "Miss Allison seems to warn you not to trust too much to the permanence of my affection; but you need not fear that you will ever lose it, unless, indeed, you cease to be deserving of it. No, nor even then," he added, drawing her closer to him, "for even should you grow very naughty and troublesome, you would still be *my child*—a part of myself and of my lost Elsie, and therefore very dear to me."

"Ah! papa, how could I ever *bear* to lose your love? I think I should die," she said, dropping her head on his breast, with almost a sob. "Oh! if I am ever very, *very* naughty, papa, punish me as severely as you will; but oh, never, *never* quit *loving* me."

"Set your heart at rest, my darling," he said, tenderly, "there is no danger of such a thing. I could not do it, if I wished."

Ah! there came a time when Elsie had sore need of all the comfort the memory of those words could give.

"What are you going to wear to Isabel Carleton's party, to-night, Elsie?" asked Lucy, at the dinner table.

"Nothing," replied Elsie, with an arch smile, "I am not going, Lucy," she added.

"Not going! well, now, that is *too* bad," cried Lucy, indignantly. "I think it's really mean of your papa; he never lets you go anywhere."

"Oh, Lucy! he let me go to town with Carry the other day; he has let me stay up late two or three nights since you came; he is going to let me ride with the rest of you this afternoon, and he said that I might do just as I pleased about going to-night," Elsie summed up

rather triumphantly, adding, in a very pleasant tone, "It is entirely my own choice to stay at home; so you see, Lucy, you must not blame my papa before you know."

Lucy looked a little ashamed, while Mary Leslie exclaimed:

"Your own choice, Elsie? why, how strange! don't you like parties?"

"Not nearly so well as a quiet evening with papa," replied Elsie, smiling.

"Well, you are a queer girl!" was Mary's comment, while Caroline expressed her disappointment and vainly endeavored to change Elsie's determination. The little girl was firm, because she felt sure she was doing right, and soon managed to change the subject of conversation to the pleasure nearest at hand—the ride they were to take immediately after dinner.

They were a merry party, and really enjoyed themselves about as much as they had expected; but they returned earlier than usual, as the gentlemen decided that the little ladies needed some time to rest before the evening entertainment.

Elsie assisted her young friends to dress for the party—generously offering to lend them any of her ornaments that they might fancy—saw them come down, one after another, full of mirth and eager expectation, and looking so pretty and graceful in their beautiful evening-dresses, heard their expressions of commiseration toward herself, and watched the last carriage roll away without a sigh or regret that she was left behind. And in another moment a graceful little figure glided quietly across the library, and sitting down on a stool at Mr. Dinsmore's feet, looked lovingly into his face with a pair of soft, dark eyes.

His pen was moving rapidly over the paper, but ere long there was a pause, and laying his hand caressingly on the curly head, he said, "How quiet my little girl is; but where is your book, daughter?"

"If you please, papa, I would rather answer Miss Rose's letter."

"You may," he said, "and if you want to stay with me, you may ring the bell and tell the servant to bring your writing desk here."

She joyfully availed herself of the permission, and soon her pen was vainly trying to keep pace with her father's. But presently his was thrown aside, and rising, he stood behind her chair, giving her directions how to sit, how to hold the pen, how to form this or that letter more correctly, guiding her hand, and commending her efforts to improve.

"There, you have spelled a word wrong, and I see you have one or two capitals where there should be a small letter; and that last sentence is not perfectly grammatical," he said. "You must let me correct it when you are done, and then you must copy it off more carefully."

Elsie looked very much mortified.

"Never mind, daughter," he said kindly, patting her cheek; "you do very well for a *little* girl; I dare say I made a great many more mistakes at your age, and I don't expect you to do better than I did."

"Oh, papa, the letters I sent you when you were away must have been full of blunders, I am afraid," she said, blushing deeply; "were you not very much ashamed of me? How could you bear to read them?"

"Ashamed of you, darling? No, indeed, neither of you nor them. I loved them all the better for the mistakes, because they showed how entirely your own they were; and I could not but be pleased with them when every line breathed such love to me. My little daughter's confidence and affection are worth more to me than the finest gold, or the most priceless jewels."

He bent down and kissed her fondly as he spoke; then, returning to his seat, bade her finish her letter and bring it to him when done.

He took up his pen, and Elsie collected her thoughts once more, worked busily and silently for another half hour, and then brought her sheet to him for inspection; presenting it with a timid, bashful air, "I am afraid it is very full of mistakes, papa," she said.

"Never mind, daughter," he answered, encouragingly; "I know that it takes a great deal of practice to make perfect, and it will be a great pleasure to me to see you improve."

He looked over it, pointed out the mistakes very kindly and gently, put the capitals in their proper places, corrected the punctuation, and showed her how one or two of her sentences might be improved.

Then, handing it back, he said, "You had better put it in your desk now, and leave the copying until to-morrow, as it will soon be your bedtime, and I want you on my knee until then."

Elsie's face grew very bright, and she hastened to do his bidding.

"And may I talk, papa?" she asked, as he pushed away his writing, wheeled his chair about toward the fire, and then took her on his knee.

"Yes," he said, smiling, "that is exactly what I want you to do. Tell me what you have been doing all day, and how you are enjoying your holidays; or talk to me of anything that pleases, or that troubles you. I love to be made the confidant of my little girl's joys and sorrows; and I want her always to feel that she is sure of papa's sympathy."

"I am so glad that I may tell you everything, my own papa," she answered, putting her arm around his neck, and laying her cheek to his. "I have enjoyed this day very much, because I have been with you nearly all the time; and then, I had that nice letter from Miss Rose, too."

"Yes, it was a very pleasant letter," he said; and then he asked her what she had been doing in those hours when she had not been with him; and she gave him an animated account of the occurrences of that and several of the preceding days, and told of some little accidents that had happened—amongst them that of the broken doll; and spoke of the sorrow it had caused her; but she did not blame either Flora or Enna, and concluded her narrative by saying that, "good, kind Mrs. Brown had mended it, so that it was almost as good as ever."

He listened with evident interest to all she said, expressed sympathy in her little trials, and gave her some good advice.