

**RAINBOW LIGHT.
SEVEN STORIES**

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Rainbow Light. Seven Stories by A. E. M.

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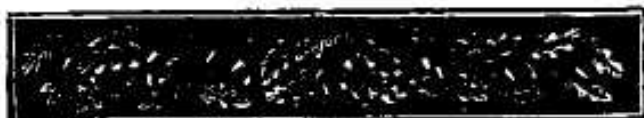
RAINBOW LIGHT.
SEVEN STORIES.

By A. E. M.,
AUTHOR OF "SUNDAYS AT KINGSVIS," ETC.

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RAINBOW LIGHT.

INTRODUCTION.

IT was a battered, shabby old portfolio of blue morocco, which once had contained drawings or prints. It was one of a series, for on it was printed in letters which once had been gilded, "No. III. Syria, Lebanon, and Damascus."

Now it contained nothing but odds and ends, scraps of old writing, and the children cast it aside after a hasty glance, and looked for something more entertaining.

The children were two happy little girls, May and Daisy. They were busy in the delightful occupation of rummaging in an old chest in a lumber room on a wet day. It had been a promise of long standing that they were to be

allowed to search for treasures in this old chest, which was called in the family "Lady Jean's chest." And now Daisy's twelfth birthday being a wet, dismal day, their mother had led them up to the attic where the mysterious chest stood, and had given them full permission to search, promising to return to see the treasures which they expected to find. Treasures of much value in their estimation they did find,—old faded silk dresses of ancient fashion, embroidered fans and sachets, sweet-scented sandal and cedar-wood caskets, and story books in old print, with the letter s long like an *f*, drawings and materials for making wax flowers,—many things of no real value, but which the two children thought very precious, and with which they promised to amuse themselves in wet days to come.

It was getting dark now, and their mother came up according to her promise. The treasure trove was exhibited, and after she had told them the history of some of the articles, and had rather disappointed them by saying that the strings of pearls in the old red leather case were only made of paste, Daisy opened the old blue morocco portfolio, and thought it looked more interesting than at her first hurried examination of it. Soon she exclaimed in wonder

at the old yellow-tinted paper on which was traced curious old-fashioned writing, which she could not read. She brought the portfolio to her mother, who read with little difficulty on the first bundle of manuscript the inscription in the careful regular writing of a former generation, "Written for my dear bairns—in the time of their trouble—the while we were in Ravenstone."

The children wondered to see their mother's blue eyes fill with tears as she looked at the faded writing, but she looked up smiling and said she would tell them why she cared so much to have found this manuscript, and why the sight of these words in their old-fashioned Scotch, and formal penmanship, made her cry.

Then they all went down from the dark attic, which was getting quite dismal in the failing light, and they gathered round the blazing fire in the cozy sitting-room, and Daisy and May with the delightful feeling of having found a real living story, more delightful than any of those in their story books, listened while their mother began.

"These papers which you have brought to light, Daisy and May, belong to a time long before you were born, before mamma even was

born, but my own dear mother used to tell me about the Lady Jean to whom belonged the old chest which you have such pleasure in searching. Lady Jean was a great-aunt of my mother's, and she used to live almost entirely in the family of my mother when she was young, and she and her sisters were devotedly attached to her. They had lost their mother when almost babies, and this Lady Jean did all she could to supply to them a mother's care. So they lived peacefully till 'the time of their trouble,' as Lady Jean has called it, came. I cannot enter into all the history of that time, it would take too long, and perhaps you would hardly understand it,—and besides it involves a tale of cruel wrong-doing and bitter hate, which I would rather not repeat to you. It will suffice for me to tell you that some one took into his heart an evil thought, and tried to prove that my grandfather had not rightfully inherited his title and his lovely estate and house at Grey Towers, which you know so well, and where you delight to go to visit Uncle Piers Haven and Aunt Marion. This brought great trouble, for the case had to be tried before the courts of law, and so well had the evil-doer managed, that the papers which should have proved my grandfather's title were

not forthcoming, and the case went against him, and for a time he and good Lady Jean had to leave their beautiful home, and to go away almost in poverty to live as best they could, and where they could. I say for a time, for before many years had passed the whole plot and villany was discovered, and my venerable grandfather was restored to his place and honours.

“My dear mother was about sixteen at the time when this trouble came, and she has often told me about it, and of the sorrow they had in parting from old and faithful servants, and in seeing all the horses taken away to be sold. My mother had a beautiful chestnut horse, her very own, called *Cœur de Lion*, and she used to tell me how she cried at parting with him, and how her father in the midst of all his greater troubles was so tender and kind in comforting her. He taught her to look at all that had come to them as coming from the hand of God. He never would allow one word of anger or bitterness against that other who had disturbed him in the possession of his own.

“During the years that their banishment lasted they lived in a very small way at Ravenstone, which was a curious old house with a