

**LIVE TO BE USEFUL; OR,
THE STORY OF ANNIE LEE
AND HER IRISH NURSE**

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Live to be useful; or, The story of Annie Lee and her Irish nurse by Annie Lee

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ANNIE LEE

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THE KIND IRISH NURSE



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HER IRISH NURSE.



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LIVE TO BE USEFUL.



CHAPTER I.

ANNIE'S PLAN.



ANNIE LEE was a cripple. Until her eighth summer she had been strong and well, like most other children; but then disease began to appear, and although she had skilful doctors and kind nurses, it was soon too plain that she was never to be well again.

Five years of pain and weakness had been her portion at the time our story commences. So accustomed had she become to her sad situation, that it seemed like a delusive dream when she remembered the sportive hours of her earlier childhood. Like other sick children, she was far more thoughtful than was quite natural at

her age, and very seldom in her easiest moments laughed aloud. But she was not an unhappy child.

As soon as she was old enough to understand that she had a sinful heart and needed salvation, she had earnestly sought the Saviour of sinners, and had been graciously received by him, and made a lamb of his flock. In the school of Christ she learned to bear pain without murmuring, and to submit with cheerfulness to her lot in life. Instead of requiring comfort from her parents, who seemed to realize her misfortune more fully than she did herself, she became their consoler, and rarely failed in her efforts to lighten their sorrow on her account.

"It might have been so much worse, mamma," she said one day, when Mrs. Lee was lamenting her condition. "Only think of poor lame Phelim, Biddy Dillon's little boy."

"What is the matter with him?" asked her mother.

"Have you not seen him? He is often in the back-yard when Biddy comes to wash in the kitchen. I've watched him often. I think it was before he came to this country—but I'm not sure—that a large stone, falling from a wall, so mangled his poor limbs that one of them had to be cut off. I never see him limping about on

his crutches while Bidly is washing without thanking God for my happier fate."

"Why, Annie, it is not probable that he suffers one-half as much as you do."

"As much pain, do you mean, mamma?"

"Yes."

"I wasn't thinking of that. They are very poor; and if he lives to be a man, how can he earn the comforts of life? I need have no care on that account."

"I daresay he has none. There are several trades that he might learn which require a sitting posture; he might be a shoemaker, for instance. Do not fret on his account, Annie."

"It seems to me, mamma," replied Annie, with a thoughtful air, "that his only prospect for the future is to be pushed about here and there in the crowd, until at last he finds a refuge in the grave."

"What foolish fancies!" said Mrs. Lee, rising, as a noise in the yard below attracted her to the window. "We know nothing about the future, and it is not quite right to make ourselves sad about it. It is hardly like your usual trust in God, to be thus imagining trouble. There's a little lame boy in the yard, who, I suppose, is Phelim; he seems happy enough. Hark! don't you hear him sing? He is sitting on the bench

behind the clothes-frame, and his mother is hanging out the clothes to dry. Don't you hear her laugh at what he is singing?"

"What is it, mamma? Can you hear the words?" asked Annie, brightening up, and raising herself on her elbow as she lay on her low couch.

"I hear them very well; but his Irish gibberish is as Greek to me. All that I can make out is what seems to be the chorus:

"O Ireland, green Ireland,
Sweet gem o' the sea!"

"Mamma," said Annie, after listening with smiling interest a while, "it troubles me very often because Phelim knows nothing about our Saviour. He has a sister, two years older than I am, who cannot read. She never went to school; and none of the family can read a word."

"How did you learn this?"

"From Phelim. I speak to him sometimes when he plays under the window."

"Well, I don't know how we can help them. If we should offer to teach them, they would not be willing to learn."

"Are you sure of it, mamma?"

"Not quite so sure, perhaps, as if I had tried to instruct them; but I know that they regard a book as a sort of Protestant trap, made on pur-

pose to catch them, soul and body. It is an evil that we cannot remedy.—Have you more pain than usual, my dear?" said Mrs. Lee, appearing a little startled, and bending anxiously over Annie's couch as she observed an unusual flush on her pale cheek.

"No, mamma; but I was thinking of a plan that I have had for some weeks, and hoping that you would not object to it."

"Object! You shall have whatever you like, if it can be procured. What is it, Annie?"

"Oh, dear mamma," said Annie, "I do so long to do some good! I cannot bear to live such a useless life. Every day, when I feel the goodness of God and his great love to me, I long to do something for him. And I think, mamma, that I have planned a way to do good without getting off my sofa."

"You are always doing good, Annie. Do you suppose that your patience under suffering is not a lesson to us in our smaller trials? There are many ways in which you are a blessing to us all; so do not weary yourself with new schemes. If God had required active service from you, he would have given you health and strength."

"But I can do something, mamma. Please to hear my plan. I want to tell you something