

ALGY'S LESSON

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Algy's Lesson by S. E. de Morgan

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"Mr. Frankland, I've torn the Virgil!"—Page 18.

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BY

S. E. DE MORGAN.

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ALGY'S LESSON.

"THERE, Mary; you are looking out of the window at a spider! Why don't you go on with your work?"

"Look how the spider is working away! I was just thinking if that thread would go into my needle," the little girl answered.

"What nonsense! when you know it would crack directly. You must be cracked to fancy such things."

"Mary's not cracked. It's *you*, Effie, that are stupid. If you'd a quarter of Mary's sense, or if you were only half as clever as the spider even ——"

"Don't *you* talk, Algy. What are you doing, I should like to know?"

"If I were to tell you, you would be no wiser. I am finding the English of 'fagi.'"

A little boy looked up from his slate.

"Algy and Effie, do be quiet; I can't do my sum while you are finding fault with each other."

"We're not finding fault. I said, certainly, that Effie could not spin like a spider: can she, pray?"

"And I say," Effie observed, "that you're stupid to talk such nonsense. Pray can you duck under water, like the white duck? There she goes! down, and now up again. Will your fine Latin books teach you how to do that?"

"I *said* you were cracked," Algy retorted, with provoking coolness. "How do you know what my books teach me?"

"All I know is, that you two are always quarrelling," said Willy, holding his hands against his ears.

"It's Algy. He never will mind his own business," Effie said.

"That's good! Who first meddled with Mary? You're looking in the looking-glass at yourself, and you think you see me."

Effie grew angry, and said something more about her brother's book, and stupid Latin.

"Leave my book alone. Work and French verbs are what girls have to do with. 'Je suis, too suis, il suis.'"

Effie was too much irritated to notice Algy's bad French. Snatching at the book which he was construing, she exclaimed, "I can read *your* lesson as well as you can read mine."

Her hand did not reach the book,

and Algernon, starting, let it fall to the ground, only a torn fragment of the first leaf of the "Georgics" remaining in his hand.

"Oh, what shall I do! The Virgil that Mr. Frankland lent me this morning is torn! I promised him that I would take such care of it!"

"You did it yourself; did not he, mamma?" said Effie, who, however, looked frightened and bewildered, as her brother held up the rent page.

Mrs. Daverell had not been in the room while the dispute went on, and had only heard the few last words. She was writing a letter on business, and now looked up to say—

"As far as I heard, both Algernon and Effie were wrong. I am very sorry the Virgil is torn; but I cannot talk till this letter is sent off."