

## Chapter II - The Rolling Stone

OF course Twinkle stopped then, and looked around to see who had spoken. But no one was anywhere in sight. So she started on again.

"Look out, or you'll step on me!" cried the voice a second time.

She looked at her feet very carefully. There was nothing near them but a big round stone that was about the size of her head, and a prickly thistle that she never would step on if she could possibly help it.

"Who's talking?" she asked.

"Why, I'm talking," answered the voice. "Who do you suppose it is?"

"I don't know," said Twinkle. "I just can't see anybody at all."

"Then you must be blind," said the voice. "I'm the Rolling Stone, and I'm about two inches from your left toes."

"The Rolling Stone!"

"That's it. That's me. I'm the Rolling Stone that gathers no moss."

"You can't be," said Twinkle, sitting down in the path and looking carefully at the stone.

"Why not?"

"Because you don't roll," she said. "You're a stone, of course; I can see that, all right. But you're not rolling."

"How silly!" replied the Stone. "I don't have to roll every minute to be a Rolling Stone, do I?"

"Of course you do," answered Twinkle. "If you don't roll you're just a common, still stone."

"Well, I declare!" exclaimed the Stone; "you don't seem to understand anything. You're a Talking Girl, are you not?"

"To be sure I am," said Twinkle.

"But you don't talk every minute, do you?"

"Mama says I do," she answered.

"But you don't. You're sometimes quiet, aren't you?"

"Course I am."

"That's the way with me. Sometimes I roll, and so I'm called the Rolling Stone. Sometimes you talk, and so you're the Talking Girl."

"No; I'm Twinkle," she said.

"That doesn't sound like a name," remarked the Stone.

"It's what papa calls me, anyway," explained the girl. Then, thinking she had lingered long enough, she added:

"I'm going up the hill to pick those berries. Since you can roll, suppose you go with me."

"What! Up hill?" exclaimed the Stone.

"Why not?" asked Twinkle.

"Who ever heard of a stone rolling up hill? It's unnatural!"

"Any stone can roll down hill," said the child. "If you can't roll up hill, you're no better than a common cobble-stone."

"Oh, I can roll up hill if I have to," declared the Stone, peevishly. "But it's hard work, and nearly breaks my back."

"I can't see that you have any back," said Twinkle.

"Why, I'm all back," replied the Stone. "When your back aches, it's only a part of you. But when my back aches, it's all of me except the middle."

"The middle ache is the worst of all," said Twinkle, solemnly. "Well, if you don't want to go," she added, jumping up, "I'll say good-bye."

"Anything to be sociable," said the Stone, sighing deeply. "I'll go along and keep you company. But it's lots easier to roll down than it is to roll up, I assure you!"

"Why, you're a reg'lar grumbler!" exclaimed Twinkle.

"That's because I lead a hard life," returned the Stone, dismally. "But don't let us quarrel; it is so seldom I get a chance to talk with one of my own standing in society."

"You can't have any standing, without feet," declared Twinkle, shaking her head at the Stone.

"One can have understanding, at least," was the answer; "and understanding is the best standing any person can have."

"Perhaps that is true," said the child, thoughtfully; "but I'm glad I have legs, just the same."