

clasped in terror. At once she guessed what it was. A tall pipe, which carried off the smoke from the kitchen fire had lately blown down. Grandpa had said it was not safe without it, for now cinders might blow on the dry, old roof. This very afternoon, he had gone, with the hired man, to bring home a new pipe.

But, perhaps that pipe was coming too late.

There had been a great fire in the kitchen all the morning, Polly knew—along with which had come a new birthday grievance in the fact of Aunt Sarah's not having asked her to help about what she was baking. Something good it must have been, too, by the smell; but she hadn't even baked her a patty-pan cake, or offered her so much as a cookie.

Polly watched the smoke. Only a little curl at first, but getting larger. She was about to scream, for what is more natural than to scream at sight of a fire where fire should not be?

But, with a sudden effort, she controlled herself. Grandma was the only person in the house except herself. She could do nothing, she was not strong, and a fright might do her great harm. The curl of smoke grew larger. Now it came in bunches with the gusts of wind. Now—yes, there was a little tongue of flame.

In all her life Polly will never forget the terror which came over her with the thought of all that was depending on her in this dread emergency. The old buildings, which formed the dear home of all she loved, lay at the mercy of a pitiless destroyer, unless she, with her feeble hands, could prevent it. Could she?

For one or two moments she held her breath, sending up a swift prayer that she might be enabled to do the right thing. Then she snatched up a rag rug from the floor, and brought her water-pitcher to the window. She opened it. Could she step out? Her head began to swim with the thought. But there was no time to lose. With the rug under her arm, and in one hand the pitcher, trembling in every limb, she walked along the shaking, rattling shingles; the whole roof seemed to sway under her feet. She reached the end, but never could remember how she got down upon the lower roof.

But she trampled down her fears as she bravely did the work she had come to do. Pouring the water over the rug, she beat out the fire with it again and again. The bit of flame was soon put out; but how long it seemed before she saw the last of the smoke; and could feel sure that no smouldering danger was left!

At length, certain of this, she turned sick and faint. The edge of the porch roof had crumbled under her feet as she had stepped down from it; and nothing could have induced her to climb upon it. She could not get down without help, and for a long hour she waited in the cutting wind.

Grandpa and Caleb came at last. Caleb put up a ladder, and brought her down, and grandpa carried her into the house in his arms.

Aunt Sarah was just coming in the gate, and, with everyone else, was shocked and horrified, as Polly, through quivering lips, and just able to keep back her sobs, told her strange story.

'Well, I've heard tell of heroines before,' said grandpa; 'but I don't know as I ever heard tell of a braver little one than you, Polly.'

'What shall we give her?' said grandma, as they flew about and petted her, and seated her by the fire wrapped in warm blankets.

'Peppermint tea,' said grandpa.

'Catnip's better,' said grandma.

'Nothing like ginger tea,' said Aunt Sarah, positively.

And long before it could be agreed upon, three bowlfuls had been made; and Polly had to take some of each kind. It is pleasant to be able to say that, whether it was due to the petting, or the wrapping, or the teas, Polly suffered no harm from the exposure.

'And here is her birthday letter,' said grandpa, when at length Aunt Sarah stopped bringing her some kind of tea. 'It was at the post-office, and I thought I'd wait to give it to her till she was well warmed up.'

Polly read it, and handed it with a smile to Aunt Sarah, to read to the others. The beginning is the only part we shall listen to:—

'My Dear Little Daughter,—Your birthday is very near, and I am kept so closely at your aunt's bedside as to be able to do nothing to make it pleasant for you. But I wish you to remember, dear, that though nothing may be done to make it a special day to you, you may, if you try, make it a special day to others.'

'Well, if she hasn't—' Aunt Sarah broke off with a little cry, and ran to give Polly another hugging, in which the others joined.

'And now,' said Aunt Sarah, 'do you feel well enough to dress?'

'Dress?' said Polly, enquiringly; for she did not usually change her dress in the afternoon.

'Yes; I see two of your little friends coming up the walk.'

Polly skipped up the stairs quite actively, and a quarter of an hour later she was down again to meet, not simply two girls, but two dozen, who greeted her with—

'Happy birthday, Polly! Many returns of the day!'

In her own room at bedtime Polly again talked to herself.

'Oh! oh! oh! How glad I am that I didn't let anybody know how cross I felt all the morning because I thought nobody was thinking of my birthday. And all that baking that Aunt Sarah was doing was for my party. And when she went down to the village, it was for the nuts and candy.'

'I like what mamma says about birthdays.' She opened the letter and read from it—

'Though nothing may be done to make it a special day to you, you may make it a special day to others by self-forgetfulness, by acts of sweet, loving kindness, by watching for opportunities to make it a happy day for some one.'

'Yes, I am going to try it after this — to make all my birthdays good days to somebody even though there isn't a fire on the roof to put out.'

Any girl can do it or any boy. — Sydney Dayre, in 'Silver Links.'

Reward of Truthfulness.

When Aristotle, the Grecian philosopher, who was tutor to Alexander the Great, was asked what a man could gain by uttering falsehoods, he replied, 'Not to be credited when he shall tell the truth.' On the other hand, it is related that when Petrarck, the Italian poet, a man of strict integrity, was summoned as a witness, and offered, in the usual manner to take an oath before a court of justice, the judge closed the book, saying, 'As to you, Petrarck, your word is sufficient.' — Biblical Museum.

Correspondence

Smithville.

Dear Editor,—I have been much interested in reading the correspondence of the 'Northern Messenger,' and I cannot find any boy or girl that has a birthday like myself. I am ten years old, but have only had two birth-

days, I was born on Feb. 29, 1888. There is a little boy down in St. Ann's, born the same day; we are both one age. My mother gave me a party when I was eight years old, that was my last birthday. We invited all the little girls of this place. I had a cousin come from St. Paul's, Minn., to visit me at that time and she was here at the party; we had a splendid time. The girls would say, 'We cannot go to such parties every day, only once in four years.' Now I must wait till I am sixteen to have another birthday. I once felt very bad as I had so few birthdays; but I am out-growing that feeling now.

I have only one sister. She is older than I am; her name is Ivy. We have two pet cats; we named the one Beauty. Mother says she gets her name from her good principles, not her looks. She is a great mouser; she brings rats and mice for the other big, fat, lazy fellow to eat; when she comes and calls he will come down and eat it and return to his bed again quite satisfied, and he is larger than Beauty; we think he ought to be ashamed of himself.

We have a Mission Band in connection with our church, and we are trying to assist the little boys and girls in heathen lands that they may enjoy the same privileges that we do of church and Sabbath-schools.

We are members of the Presbyterian Church of this place, and get the 'Messenger' through the Sabbath-school. Your reader,

MYRTLE W.

Melbourne.

Dear Editor,—I have taken the 'Northern Messenger,' for one year. My father is a farmer. We have a lot of cows and horses. I have two miles to go to school. I have one brother, and a cousin who lives with us.

Your little reader,

WALTER S.

Dorset.

Dear Editor,—I take the 'Messenger,' and like it very much. I am nine years old. I go to school, but I have been home with a sore throat for a few days. I often have a sore throat, the effects of scarlet fever. I have three little sisters and one little brother. We live on the shore of Lake Muskoka, a very pleasant place in summer for visitors.

My papa has a saw-mill and a planing-mill. We have three horses; one is a great favorite; he is white and over twenty years old. We have a cat, named 'Tiffie,' and a collie dog named 'Rocksy.'

I have never seen a letter in the 'Messenger' from this part. Your reader,

MAGGIE.

Wyandot.

Dear Editor,—We take the 'Northern Messenger,' and I am very much interested in the stories in it, also in the correspondence. We take the 'Weekly Witness,' too. We have to go quite a long way to get to Sunday-school, but we go quite regularly. We hold the Sunday-school in the school-house. It is a union Sunday-school, and not very large.

I go to school as regularly as possible, but in the winter, when the snow is deep, it is not very nice to walk so far, and I stay home on real blustry days.

I live in the country, and like it very much.

As this is the first time I have ever written to the 'Messenger,' I will now draw my letter to a close. I remain your reader,

MARY.

Melbourne.

Dear Editor,—I am a little boy just eight years old. We live on a farm, and we have got a great big dog, and ten cows. We have five calves; we had six, but one died. We have four cats and seven kittens, and three horses. I go to Sunday-school, and I get the 'Northern Messenger.'

We had a good crop of hay this year, and a good crop of grain. I remain,

GORDON K.

Melbourne.

Dear Editor,—I go to Sunday-school and get the 'Northern Messenger,' and like it very much. I live on a farm, and we have a sugar place, and make sugar every year. I go to school, and I am in the third reader. We have two horses and five cows, and three calves, and fourteen pigs, and thirteen sheep.

LEWIS,

Age nine years.