

Homer Lane as he thought, and for the first time, of the example he was setting to his own younger brothers. Would he want Will or Harold to speak as he had, or do as he was doing? It had not occurred to him in that light before.

"And how is your father now?" asked Patty. "I often think how hard it must be for him to be shut up all these weeks, and what he must suffer. Grandpa had his back hurt once, and he says it was dreadful."

"Yes, it does pain him a good deal, I suppose," admitted Homer, with another twinge of conscience at the scant consideration that, with his own young health and strength, he had given to his father's weakness and pain.

"I am so glad he is gaining, for at one time Dr. Lee told mamma he was quite alarmed for the result."

"Alarmed for the result." Homer started at the words. He had not heard that before. And with a sudden realization it rushed over him, all his father had been to them, what he was to them, and what it would be without him.

"And a father with a hurt back is a good deal better than none at all," Patty continued, with a little sigh. "And what a pleasure it must be that you can do so much to help him now."

Patty was not trying to preach. She never would have thought of preaching to any one, much less to Homer, who, besides being five years older than herself, had been Rob's dearest friend.

Of the atmosphere that had often existed in the Lane household she had no idea; the state of mind that so lately had been Homer's never entered her affectionate and loyal heart. It was all unconsciously, as he well knew, that she had touched the sore spots in his heart, and because unconsciously the more effectively.

"But I must take these apples in, or poor grandpa will not have them for his supper."

Still leaning on the fence, Homer watched her as she turned away. It was not only what she had said, but the life that lay behind her words, that had given

them their influence, to her so unconscious. What Patty's life was he was well aware.

He had seen somewhat of it in Rob's lifetime, and more and more he knew that all the family—the frail mother, the old grandfather, the young brothers—leaned on that young girl's love and courage. An easy life? No; and yet how its loving patience, its cheerful unselfishness rebuked and shamed his own.

"Patty," he called after her, "Patty."

She stopped, and turned at his voice, her smiling face like a fresh apple blossom against the trunks of the brown old trees.

"I wish you would come over and see father?"

"Me?" with an accent of surprise.

"Yes. You would do him good, I am sure. You have done me good."

"What, me?" with a still stronger accent of questioning incredulity.

"Yes, more good than you know."

A little later Homer Lane entered his father's room. "I have been over," he said, "and telegraphed about the contract, and that my letter was a mistake. And father," with a new tenderness in his voice as he came nearer the white, worn face on the pillows, "I am sorry I spoke to you as I did, when you have so much pain to bear, too."

"And I am sorry I spoke as I did, Homer. You mustn't mind me if I do get cross sometimes. It will be all right about the contract, and really you do very well, Homer. I should not know how to get along without you."

Then the young, strong hand closed over the older and thinner one, and with the clasp Homer Lane sealed the resolve to be, as never before, a helpful son, a faithful brother.

And Patty went about her household tasks, and drove up Dapple and Bess from the pasture, with a great sense of pleasure in her humble little heart, and the wonder if it could possibly be true that she, Patty Bruce, had really done any one good?

THE "C'MITTEE."

"Why I'm the c'mittee, mamma; I must go!"

"Committee for what, child?" inquired Mrs. Whaley. "You don't even know those people."

"Nora Stillwell is one of the Sunbeams, mamma. Miss Slade said she was in the shadow now, 'cause she's sick, and I'm the c'mittee to take sunshine to her to-day."

"Well, little Sunbeam, I suppose you'll have to go and carry your sunshine." So the good mother helped Olive to get ready.

Mrs. Stillwell looked a little astonished when she opened her front door that afternoon and saw a little girl standing outside with both hands full and both pockets stuffed full.

"I'm a Sunbeam c'mittee, and would like to see Nora Stillwell. She's one of our Sunbeams, and we heard she was sick."

There was such a sunshiny look on Olive's face that Mrs. Stillwell couldn't help but exclaim: "Bless your dear little heart! I really believe a sight of you will do Nora more good than all the doctors put together. Come right in, you dear little child!"

When they entered the sick room Nora dropped the book she had been trying to read, clasped her hands in her lap, and laid her head back against the pillows for very joy.

"Nora, you know our c'mitties! Well, I'm a Sunshine c'mittee come to see you. How do you do? Here's a beautiful pear I've brought you; here are two lovely fresh eggs in this cute little basket—my own Biddy laid 'em; and here in my pocket is a puzzle that Willie Ogle said you could make out, Nora Stillwell, if anybody could and here," tugging at her other pocket, "is THE GEM for last Sunday, and it has a story in it that our teacher wrote." So she continued to prattle. And thus "the c'mittee" flooded the room with sunshine.

Olive had been told not to stay too long, so, in a little while, she bade Nora good bye telling her to look out for somebody else, next day.