

side mamma's bed. 'Mamma,' she whispered with her brown eyes filled with dreams, 'Did you hear what Lucy said?'

'No,' mamma replied, 'I did not hear Lucy at all.'

'Why, mamma, dear, she said as plain as plain as plain can be: "Come quick, come quick!"'

Mamma smiled. And then, because she knew her little girl's language even if she did not know Lucy's, she got up and dressed Elsie, setting her free to wander forth in the dawn of that first wonderful day.

Elsie went to the cage. Elsie was hopping from perch to perch, almost beside herself with joy. And then, so Elsie told us later, Lucy came to the bars of the cage and begged to be set free.

'I will come back,' she had pleaded. 'But I long to touch my feet in the water, and to fly to the top of that high, high mountain and see what lies beyond.'

Elsie's eyes filled with tears as she told us. She had not dared open the cage door, but something told her of the longing poor Lucy felt, and she throbbed in sympathy.

All that day the pretty bird sat on her perch and gazed rapturously at the lake and the solemn mountains. She scarcely touched food or drink, and only chirped when Elsie left her play and came to speak lovingly to her. What the little bird-mind thought, of course, we could not know, but I fancy that through all the golden day it was planning a way of escape. For with that innate love of freedom struggling in the little heart, gilded bars were but trifles to overcome.

While we slept that second night, Lucy pried the slender wires apart, and with no note of warning flew away into the freedom for which she had so yearned.

When we went to give her our morning greeting, we found only the empty cage, on the floor of which lay a solitary green feather. A mute but beautiful farewell!

Elsie took the little feather and kissed it, breaking into wild sobs as she did so.

'Do not cry, Elsie dear,' said mamma. 'Lucy may come back. We will put food and water in her cage and leave the door open. Perhaps when she is hungry and tired she will come home gladly enough.'

'No, no!' sobbed the child. 'Lucy wanted to see over the high mountain, and if she ever does, she will never come back to this little cage.'

However, we put the cage with water and a dainty meal inside below the trees by the lake.

Again and again through the day, Elsie stole to the deserted cage, hoping and longing for the return of the fugitive.

During the early afternoon we heard an occasional soft call, and once, looking up, we saw among the leaves the bright form of Lucy. She gazed at the empty cage and the tempting food. She chirped in loving tones to her little mistress. We held our breath and watched expectantly. The gay feathers darted from bough to bough, but suddenly the little head turned toward the dark mountain, and with a wild free cry she flew away into the clear sunlight. Away she went in the direction of the dark hills, until, as a tiny speck, we saw her against the blue sky.

Elsie flung herself down beneath the trees, and with an arm thrown about the empty cage, gave herself up to hopeless

scrow. We tried to comfort her, but grief would have its way. Fainter and fainter came the sobs, and at last they ceased. Little Elsie had forgotten her loss in sleep. We threw a rug over her and left her to quiet dreams.

An hour later she came up to the piazza with eyes shining and smiles dimpling her face. She had had a dream. We knew what that meant. Dreams were very real things to Elsie. Her good fairy always seemed to drive away her worries by a dream, and so we knew now that our little girl had again been comforted. With all seriousness she said:

'Oh! I am so glad Lucy got away. She has had such a beautiful time. Before she came back to me this afternoon she had flown almost to the top of Black Mountain. Up there all alone by himself, she saw a kind old Indian making lovely little bows and arrows, and cunning little baskets. He loves little birds and knows the way to every place on earth. He told Lucy that if she kept right on to the highest peak, she would see the way back to her old home.'

'The dear little thing remembered then that she had promised to come back if once she could be free, so she flew all the way back here just to keep the promise if I wanted her to do so. But when I saw how happy she was, and how she longed to get back to her old home, I just could not ask her to go back in that little cage. I will leave the cage open all the time; she may come back, but I do not want her to come until she is quite, quite ready.'

I had lived much longer than little Elsie, and I knew as I tenderly kissed the sweet upturned face, that Lucy would never come back to our poor kindness if she once gained the freedom of the mountain tops.

We left the cage open, and every day Elsie put fresh food and water in it. One day a wounded bird fluttered in, and we gave it food and shelter in Lucy's dear name. When it was well it flew away, and Elsie thinks it went to tell Lucy. Perhaps she is right. If she has gone, Lucy will know her home is ever ready should she care to return. But Elsie and I have learned to hope that happy little Lucy has found the old moss covered tree beside the murmuring Florida river, and that the same gentle mother bird broods over a nest full of beautiful little green parakeets.

Hindering Peculiarities.

Many a youth has been hampered because of peculiarities which he has allowed to creep into his personality or manner, which, if realized by himself, might easily have been pruned and trained, had he only been taught the secret of habit forming.

Young people do not easily realize how much a pleasant and agreeable manner has to do with success. Everybody likes to be surrounded by agreeable people, of gentlemanly manners; not by those who are gruff, uncouth, peculiar, and disagreeable. We are all looking for sunshine and harmony in this world: we try to avoid the dark, damp, and dismal places, and shrink from harsh, disagreeable, discordant surroundings.

Even commanding ability will not always counterbalance disagreeable peculiarities. Young men and women often wonder why they lose their situations, when they have a good education, ability, and valuable experience. It is very often due to some strik-

ing peculiarity or unpleasant mannerism, which the employer does not like to speak about, and he finds some other excuse for filling the position with a more agreeable person. Employers do not like to have morose or gloomy people about them; they like bright, cheerful, buoyant, sunshiny natures that look toward the light. Sarcastic, ironical employees—those who are always insinuating, finding fault, and making innuendoes—are never popular. Stubborn, obstinate, self-willed people who always want their own way, and are selfish about everything, are not wanted; the overbold, the egotistical—those who are always bragging about what they have done and can do—are also not in favor with employers. The tattlers—those who are always meddling and making mischief among employees—and those who are always complaining, are among the people who never get on.—'Success.'

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