

LITTLE SUNSHINE.

"Bring me the tray, Ruthie," called Aunt Susan in a sharp voice.

She did not mean to be sharp, but was always very busy and in a great hurry. She thought, if she ever thought about it all, that she had no time to speak softly.

Perhaps if she had tried she would have found that it takes no more time to speak softly than to speak sharply.

Ruthie got the little tray, put upon it the cup and saucer and plate and other things, and held it up while Aunt Susan poured some coffee into the cup and put some of whatever there was for breakfast on the tray. Then the little girl started with slow and careful steps toward her mother's door, which Aunt Susan held open for her.

With eyes fixed on the coffee, and lips pressed together in her fear of spilling it, Ruthie at length reached the stand at mamma's side, and gave a merry little laugh as she set the tray upon it and held up her face for a kiss.

"See, mamma, a fresh egg on toast. I found the egg yesterday and didn't tell, so it would be a surprise."

"It looks nice, dearie. And—knife, fork, spoon, salt—you never forget anything, and you such a little dot of a thing. Before you brought my breakfast something was sure to be forgotten."

"I'm not so very little," said Ruthie, drawing herself up. "Only a big girl could carry your whole breakfast, mamma. Now I must go and find a flower for you."

Flowers were scarce in the weedy, neglected yard, but she could almost always find buttercups or daisies or clover blossoms by going into the meadow beyond. They were all sweet to her, and there was happiness for the bright-faced, cheery natured child in every breath of the soft air and every touch of the summer wind. Every bird-note brought its own delight, and the humble flowers smiled up at her, and the sunshine beamed over all, until there seemed no room for anything but joy. Holding up her little face to its rays, Ruthie danced over the clover blossoms, with a song as gay as that of any bird.

Suddenly she stopped and a shadow fell over her face.

"Mamma never has a speck of sunshine. The sun doesn't shine into her room a minute all day, for I watched for it that day I hurt my foot and had to be still. I wonder why it doesn't? It comes into the kitchen windows. It most gets to mamma's window and then it stops awhile on the porch floor, and then goes away again. I wish it would go in and shine on mamma."

Ruthie held up her hands in the streaming sunlight.

"O, if I could only carry home a whole handful!" She closed her hands over the rays and walked into the shade of a tree, where she opened them again with a shake of her head.

"No, the shine all goes away."

With very painstaking little fingers she arranged the prettiest flowers she could find into a bouquet, taking care that there should be plenty of the yellow buttercups and a stray dandelion or two which seemed to have forgotten that all their brothers had floated away on the wind. They were such a bright gold, so exactly the color of

the sun, that she felt sure that they must hold his light. She held the bunch far above her head in the sunlight as she ran home.

"Now, you beautiful flowers," she said, bringing them down for a look as she came nearer the door, "do hold on to the sunshine and carry just a bit to mamma. I can't—it slips right out of my hand. But you live in it all the time and you might, I'm sure."

With another bound or two she was by her mother's side.

"O, what a beautiful bunch you have brought me to-day, dear," said mamma.

"But you haven't done what I told you, you naughty little flowers," said Ruthie, half smiling, half pitifully.

"Done what?" asked mamma.

"I told them to bring in some sunshine for you. O mamma," said Ruthie, throwing her arms around her with tears in her eyes, "you have to lie here all the time and the sunshine never comes near you."

"Why, my bird, I can look out and see the sunshine. And I can see the trees and the grass and I can hear the bird's sing."

"Yes, but the sun doesn't shine on you. You can't go out into it and laugh and dance in it as I can. I've been trying my best to bring you some, but," she laughed at her odd little fancy, "I can't hold it in my hands and the flowers don't hold it, either. So you can't have any sunshine, poor mamma."

Mamma took the little face between both her hands and looked into the sweet blue eyes.

"I can't have any sunshine?" she said. "Why, my blessing, you are my sunshine. My room is full of it whenever you come near me. There is sunshine for me in every look of your bright eyes and in every wave of your shining hair. And you bring it to me in everything you do for me, in every sound of your voice. Why, your own little heart is full of sunshine, all running over in brightness and sweetness for mamma. Every time you come near me it is like the sun breaking out of a cloud."

Ruthie looked into mamma's face and knew she meant every word. And as she afterwards thought them over, how earnestly she resolved more and more to be sunshine for mamma.

Dear little children, are you sunshine for any one? If any one should ever say such loving words of you would they be true?

God has given you a great many sweet and pleasant things to help you make yourself a blessing to those about you. Your faces may bring bright smiles, your voices loving tones, and your active little hands may do kindly deeds without number.

If you have already been helpful to some one, try how much cheeriness and willingness you can put into the duties of this New Year. If you have not, look about you to see if there is not some one who might be happier for your tender cares. Try if you cannot make some shadowed life brighter, and be sure, if no one says it in so many words, that you are very surely sunshine to somebody.

A FATAL ATTACK.—A fatal attack of croup is a frequent occurrence among children. Every household should be guarded by keeping Hagyard's Pectoral Balsam at hand. It breaks up colds, coughs, croup, asthma and bronchitis in a remarkable manner.

WILL'S MOTTO.

"Have you got your lesson, Will?" asked Harry Mayo, standing outside the open sitting-room window of the Jones farmhouse.

"I've got it well enough." And the tattered, coverless spelling-book was thrown into the farthest corner of the room, as the lad crammed his new but battered straw hat upon his curly, half-combed hair, and started to join his comrade in the yard.

"It is not well enough unless it is perfect," replied Harry; "and I am in no hurry."

"Well enough" is my motto, and Perfect is yours" laughed Will.

"And that is why Harry is always at the head of your class, and you are at the foot," put in Aunt Hannah, with a sigh, while Mrs. Jones called after her son, "That onion bed is not thoroughly weeded by any means."

"It is weeded well enough," retorted Will, as he vaulted over a rail fence on the brow of a hill, from which point a broad sheet of water, glistening in the sunlight, was visible a mile away.

"Have you mended your boat?" asked Harry, as the two lads ran swiftly down the grassy pasture slope.

"Yes, well enough," replied Will, reaching the waters edge, and pushing the painted skiff out upon the mirror-like surface.

"A well-enough boat will not do for my mother's only boy," said Harry, stoutly. "Let us give up going upon the water to-day, and thoroughly mend and tar the 'Speedwell,' then we can take some comfort going out in her."

"Oh, nonsense! You are such a notional chap! The boat is well enough. Come on!" And jumping in, he took up the oars.

Harry sat down upon a rock, saying, "Go on, and I will stay here to render you what assistance I can when the boat sinks."

Will laughed heartily as he paddled away, and his laughter rang back over the water at intervals for a half-hour. Then he shouted, making a trumpet of his hands; "She's filling and sinking! I can't get ashore!"

"Put for Brush Island," Harry shouted back; and he knew his advice was being taken by the changed course of the little boat.

"He won't drown—he can swim," said Harry to himself. But he watched with intense anxiety, there being nothing else that he could do, until the boat disappeared and the owner struck out for the island, now only a few rods from him. Not until he had scrambled upon the rocks, and waved his hat in triumph, did Harry leave his own exposed position; then, waving his hat in reply, he turned and ran as fast as possible for the house.

"There is only one thing for me to do," he said, breathlessly, to Mrs. Jones, "and that is to go as fast as I can for Tom Fisher's boat, I am afraid we can't get him off before dark, and it is awful lonely over there."

"I don't care at all," said Aunt Hannah. "I don't pity him one bit. I think it would be a good lesson for him to stay there all night. It might teach him that nothing partly done is done well enough."

The kind old lady, however, as Harry sped away, took her knitting-work and went and sat upon the rocks

by the boat-landing, where she could see her nephew and he could see her, although the distance was too great for either to hear the voice of the other.

"He's well enough," she said to the family, as one and another came down to keep her company; "but there would be no harm in making a bonfire here, so that he will know that we have not forgotten him."

The sun went down, the daylight faded away in the west, one by one the stars came out; but still there was no sign of the approaching boat.

When the flames of the bonfire shot up against the sky, an answering flame shot out from the island.

"Oh! he had his metallic match-safe with him, that he uses when he goes fishing evenings," said his sister.

"Now, if he only had something to cook, he would be all right; but he has not, and, oh dear! how hungry he must be!" and the little girl sobbed bitterly.

The hours dragged along—one, two, three of them, and then from out of the darkness, at the upper end of the pond, a star appeared, coming gradually nearer and nearer. It was a boat with a lantern in, but it was not coming from the direction of Tom Fisher's.

They all watched breathlessly as it rounded the point and shot up into the rays of light. It was a boat with two men, and it took off the adventurer and sped to the shore.

"It seems to me as if I had been gone as long as Rip Van Winkle, said Will, as he jumped on shore. "I think my hair must be turned quite gray. I am as hungry as a wild Indian; and I am sure I could write a book, if I put down all the thoughts that have run through my mind and all the good resolutions I have made. There is one thing sure—I never will say 'Well enough' again."

"And how are you, Harry?" asked Aunt Hannah, gently, of the lad who stood quietly by.

"Oh, well enough," laughed Harry, good-naturedly. "Tom Fisher was not at home and I had to tramp three miles further, clear to the head of the pond."

"You were as much alone as I was, tramping along through the pine woods," said Will, with unusual thoughtfulness.

"Why, yes, so I was; but I did not think of it, because I was doing something for somebody, and you had nothing to do but wait."

"Have you had any supper?" asked Aunt Hannah. Harry shook his head. "Neither have I," said the old lady. "I didn't think of it, I was so anxious for both you boys."

Will was cured of his bad habit; but the school boys insisted that the initials W.E. stood not for William Everett, but for Well Enough; and Well Enough Jones he has been called all his life.

The pond where the little red boat can still be seen on the clean, sandy bottom is known as Well Enough Pond; and the short cut through the pine woods that leads from the pond to the village is known as Well Enough Lane. Many the lessons the young people in that vicinity have had enforced and impressed by this fact, and Esquire Jones' boyish motto will always cling to him and his surroundings, however high the position may be to which he attains.

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