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THE HOME CIRCLE Arabine's Baby.

Written for Farm and Home by Adalena F. Dyer.

DEAR!" mouned old Mrs Hicks, hiding her face in her apron to conceal her tears, "I don't see why this new trouble should upon me. come have trouble, trouble, nothing but trouble: I think it is more than I deserve. You

are young, Ruth, and ought to find some way out of it."
"I will, mother," said Ruth, a comely, sweet-faced woman of fifty. "Just leave it all to me and don't free any more about it, or you will be sick abed."

"Just think all I have been through with," walled the older woman, upping her dim eyes and dropping her knitting work despondingly. "First, your father died, then Rebecca and Emity and then Binle and Jason had that awful falling out—and I always did hate family quarrels so. Next, poor limit died and was buried among strangers and you and me never dared to put on mourning for fear of Jason. Now Binle's husband's dead, and they have sent her baby to us, and Jason wont let us mention Binle's name in his presence, and wouldn't harber anything that belonged to her any more than he would a black snake. So it spose my only living grand-hild will have to go to the poorhouse. She buried her face again in her agree and shook with sobs.

Ruth's eyes were full of trouble and

have to go to the poorhouse. She buried her face again in her a row and shook with sobs.

Ruth's eyes were full of trouble and doubt, but she kept her valce cheery as she tried to comfort her mother "Don't borry trouble, look on the bright side," said she, smoothing the thin gray hair soothingly. Binie s baby ain't gone to the poorhouse, and ain't likely to; but we must the too hard on Jason, if he is rough and harsh He has had enough to sour anybody Just remember what a blow it was to Jason when Binie cloped with that Hadley scamp and took all the moneywith her, for Binie was always Jason's favorite, and when he lost faith in her he seemed to lose faith in everything."

"Binie never would have done it, sobbed her mother, "if it hadn't been for her husband, and what is the use of bringing up all that scandal now" It's been dead and gone these five years."

"I just mentioned it to show that Ja

for her husband, and what is the use of bringing up all that scandal now." It's been dead and gone these five years."

"I just mentioned it to show that Ja son had renson to be put out with Binle," said Ruth mildly. Binle was thirty-eight years old and ought to have known better."

"Binle was your own sister, and she is dead," said her mother sharply. "If you can't say any good of her, you needn't say anything. She was the prettiest girl I ever had, and pretty girls always have more temptation."

"Binle was the beauty of the family, that's a fact," acknowledged Ruth good humoredly. "I never had either beauty or temptation, and when Jason wrote the whole story to me and asked me to come home and keep house for him, I came, and excepting this old trouble, we have lived happy ever since, as they say in fairy stories."

"I ain't very happy to-day," complained the older woman, "and you couldn't be, if you had any feeling for that poor child that is oming temorrow. What we shall do with her is more than I can tell," and the tearr rolled down her aithered cheeks

"I'll tell you what I'll do," said Ruth, elzed with a zudden inspiration. "The Staples children often come here to spend weeks at a time and so do the Greene children I will go to the train and get little Myrile temorrow. Let me see, she must be four years old now, and Jason will never ask a question about her. He'll take it for granted she belongs to some of my friends in the city, and Jason isn't stingy about company, whatever other faults he may have."

"You can do that," agreed her mother, brightening up and drying her

company, which have."
"You can do that," agreed her mother, brightening up and drying her tears. "It will be a comfort to have Arabine's baby here even for a few days, but the truth will come out sooner or later," the concluded, despondingle.

ingly.
"I bate to deceive Jazon." said Ruth
with a sigh. "It seems underhanded
and dishonest, but we didn't get word
that they had sent the child until today, and there is no time to make any

other arrangements now, so I must bring her here until I can do better."

The next morning Ruth told her brother, in the most matter-of-fact manner she could command, that she would like to take the horse to drive down to the city. "Well, the horse is in the barn and here is Jim to harness," said Jason in the loud, brusk voice which was his chief characteristic 'If you want him, why in thunder don't you take him?"

It was 2 o'clock in the afternoon when she returned with a rosy, smilling, flufilly dressed little tot, tucked in beside her, holding the end of the reins in the happy belief she was driving. Jason, with a hoe over his shoulder, was just crossing the road on his way to the field when they drove into the yard.

"Hullo! you did get home at last."

yard.

"Hullo! you did get home at last." he roared. "I've been expecting you these two hours. Got another Staples young one to board for the summer. ain't you? I expect before long you'll turn the whole place into an orphan asylum or little wanderers' home. Come here, Dolly," said he, in a milder voice, to the child. "Come, let the old man take you out."

'All wite" said the child, springing into his outstretched arms, without a moment's hesitation. He set her gently on the ground and examined her criti-

moment's hesitation. He set her gently on the ground and examined her critically "That ain't the Staples young one that was here last summer, Ruth," said he "Thunder' how black her eyes are She is the image of Granny Dennison."

"No, she ain't Mamie Staples, said Ruth "This is a little girl who has lost her father and mother, and I brought her here for a while, and she hurried the child into the house before any more embarrassing questions could be asked.

One within doors her grandmother

One within doors her grandmother kissed her and wept over her with a fervency that frightened and perplexed the little maid. "We must be

One within doors her grandmother kissed her and wept over her with a fervency that frightened and perplexed the little maid. "We must be very careful in our talk before her," warned Ruth with a sigh. "She is just the age to repeat all she hears."

She had been there about a fortnight when Jason returned from the village with a gaudily dressed doll for the child, which he gave her in a shamedface manner, apologizing to his sister for his folly by saying. "The young one hadn't any, and I'd as lief see a docked horse or a hornless cow as a doll-less girl. Of course it's all blamed nonsense, and so is everything else connected with a woman from the cradle to the grave." and he went out, slamming the door and grumbling loudity about everything in general.

Things went on so smoothly for a time that Ruth almost forgot that some day they must reach a climax. She was reminded of it one afternoon by Jason coming in with a note in his hand, saying in a voice of more power than sweetness: "Here's a billet Bill Stowe handed me as he rode by. It's from Debby Drinkwater, and she wants to spend the day here tomorrow, so I s'pose somebody'll have to drive down for her. Why don't the old nulsance stay at home where she belongs, instead of galavanting round over the country and bothering folks that would be better off without her?"

"She's an own cousin to mother," said Ruth mildit, "and she hasn't been here since I came home from the west."

"Well, if you and mother want her I'm willing; only keep her out of my way," was the ungracious reply as he

"Well, if you and mother want her I'm willing; only keep her out of my way," was the ungracious reply, as he

way," was the ungracious reply as he left the roem.

Noth sank weakly into the big rocking chair by the window, her face white with apprehension. "Debby Drinkwater of all people." she groaned "She has just come from New York and knows all about Binle's shairs and little Naville being sent here. and ro knows all about Binic's shairs and hittle Myrtle being sent here, and no horse can keep pace with her tongue when it gets started. I must drive down to the Corners for her in the morning, and warn her before she meets Jason not to let on who Myrtle is."

meets Jason not to let on who Myrtle is."

As Jason arose from the breakfast table the next morning, Ruth said, as if conferring a favor, "I will drive down to the Corners after I wash the dishes and get Cousin Debby, it is such a pleasant morning," Jason turned in the doorway with the gruff reply, "Fou can't go this morning, for I've got to stop to the blacksmith's to get Fan shod."

"I'd just as lief stop and get her

shod."
"I'd just as lief stop and set her shod," persiated his sister, with suppressed eagerness. "I can sit in the wagon while it's being done. I often drove our horses to be shod when John was alive."

Well, you can't take Fan this morning," was the decided reply. "Jackson would cheat a woman out of her eye teeth. He lamed her for a month the last time he shod her, and this time she'll come pretty near being shod as I say," and he closed the door with a bang.

She was nervous, almost hysterical.

month the last time he shod her, and this time she'll come pretty near being shod as I say," and he closed the door with a bang.

She was nervous, almost hysterical, when she heard the sound of Jason's returning wheels, but she rushed to the door with a forced smile to greet her guest. One look at Jason's face assured her that her secret was still safe. He was helping Cousin Debby from the wagon, with one of the droll remarks for which he was noted, for Jason, although gruff and loud spoken, had a strong sense of humor.

Ruth, feeling like a reprieved prisoner, hurried her cousin into the house and firmly resolved to warn her, at the earliest opportunity not to mention Binle or her child in the presence of Jason. Jason won't be in until dinner time," she thought, as she took Debby's cape and bonnet and saw her comfortably seated in the easiest rocking chair at the pleasantest window. But she miscalculated, as many another has done, for no sooner had Jason put up the horse than he appeared in the sunny sitting room, bearing little Myrtle on his shoulder.

"How is this for a girl?" he asked sitting her on the sofa beside him. "I think she is worth raising, don't you, hey. Debby?" Cousin Debby looked at the child critically over her glasses. "Yes, she's a nice little girl," she said, beaming upon her good humoredly. "She must be a good deal of company for you all. She don't look a mite like Arabine as I can see," she continued. "She's got the black eyes of her great grandmother Dennison, but she looks for all the world like your sister Emfly when she was that age. Did Hadley leave anything to bring her up on? I, hear he never was very forehanded." At the hated Hadley name asson arose stiffly and looking neither to the right nor left. "He don't seem to like Binie's husband any better than ever," said Cousin Debby with an indulgent laugh, wholly unconscious of the mischlef she had done.

"No." said Ruth, "he don't. If you'll excuse me I'll see about dinner and leave mother to entertain you."

Myrtle returned to her

thing now and not wait for dinner, for I want to get an early start."

Ruth busied herself with his lunch and tried to read his rugged, immobile face as he sat watching her. But not

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