

The Way You Do It.

(Sydney Dare, in the 'Presbyterian Banner.')

'Up, up, girls and boys, all.'

'Well, well. Not half-past six yet.'

'And Aunt Janet calling up.'

'How could she get into the hall to do it? Well, we must be quick.'

Two girls made ready to go down as soon as possible.

'What's up?' asked Harvey, as they passed his door.

'Aunt Janet is—certainly. And we are. That's all we know as yet.'

Aunt Janet, partly helpless with a sprained foot, was now back on her lounge ready to greet the girls with a good-morning smile.

'Oh, Aunt Janet, how did you get across the room? And why—?'

'Why are you called so early? Well, my dears, it was to give you opportunity to show your mettle. Harvey, too,' as he now joined them. 'Jane is gone.'

'When?'

'Early this morning. For a week.'

'A—week!'

'Yes, you know how she has been tossed up in her mind hearing of her mother being sick—her work for several days past really half done—but small blame to her, poor girl. An early telegram came, and she is off.'

'And mother away.'

'Do you think we can find a substitute for Jane?' asked Emily, anxiously.

'It's dreadfully hard finding girls just now,' said Ruth. 'All the farmers' girls stay at home in summer. Can you think of anyone, auntie?'

'O yes, dears, I have thought of two.'

'Not two!'

'Yes, and a nice smart boy to help and wait on them.'

Aunt Janet laughed so meaningly that there was no mistaking her.

'You mean us.'

'Yes, I mean you.'

'But,' Ruth's brow clouded, 'I never did like housework. I don't mind Emily and I settling things upstairs as we do when Jane has done sweeping, but—there will be the meals, and all the kitchen work.'

'Yes,' Aunt Janet spoke, soberly. 'And no help from me. Rather, I suppose, a little waiting on me.'

'As if we were not always glad to do that, auntie.'

'I'm sure of it, my dears. And now you have a week before you in which to do good, faithful work.'

'I don't like it at all,' as the two entered the kitchen, which showed in its disorder ample evidence that Jane's mind had of late wandered far from her work.

'She must have dropped things in a hurry. The fire's out and no coffee ground.'

'I'll tell you what,' said Ruth, 'we'll take things as easily as we can. We'll simply do what is necessary to keep things moving and let the rest go. It will be for only a week, and when Jane comes back she can soon get things evened up. Harvey, will you bring us some kindling?'

'What an awful looking wood-shed,' he said, discontentedly, as he hunted for something to split. 'Everything in such a clutter. I can hardly find anything.'

'It would have been had enough if she had gone away, leaving everything in or-

der for us,' Ruth joined his grumble. 'But to begin like this.'

'Well, we can't have it much worse when she comes back,' said Emily, with a laugh.

The breakfast carried to Aunt Janet was faultless in its fair linen, pretty china and careful preparation. But little could be said in commendation of the breakfast to which the three sat down.

'I thought you'd make an omelet,' said Harvey.

'It's so much easier having the eggs plain boiled.'

'This toast is half burned and half white.'

'You didn't bring us enough wood.'

'No fried potatoes?'

'It makes so much work washing pans,' said Ruth. 'You know we've agreed to get along without doing much.'

'I want you, dears,' said Aunt Janet, after breakfast, 'to arrange your work so as not to miss the lawn party this afternoon. I know there is a good deal to do, this being sweeping day, but we can have an early dinner. Divide up the work to suit yourselves.'

'Parlor, dining-room, sitting-room and hall to sweep and dust. And—that kitchen!'

'Let us get at that with a rush and be out of it as soon as we can,' proposed Ruth. 'Then, you sweep and I'll dust.'

'The worst of it is,' said Emily, 'if we leave things half done it will be so hateful to have to come back to it.'

'That's one of the disagreeable things we shall have to stand.'

'I hope no one will happen in on us,' said Ruth, as they at length gladly closed the kitchen door behind them.

'I never was sorry before that this is such a big room,' said Ruth, as with a face plainly showing discontent with her task, she brought the broom to the sitting-room. 'It's bright and roomy, but such a trouble to clean. But I'm not going deep into things. I needn't sweep in the corners, and these little rugs needn't be moved. I guess Em will wish there was not quite so much bric-a-brac about when she comes to the dusting.'

'Suppose we have Aunt Janet out to dinner,' she later proposed to Emily.

'But then we'll have to be so careful about the dining-room—and about the dinner.'

'Sure enough, so we won't.'

When Emily came to the dusting she showed a skill equal to that of her sister in dusting in front of and around the small articles instead of taking time to move them. As the upstairs work was done with the same careful avoidance of extra trouble there was plenty of time for the getting of the early dinner.

Aunt Janet smiled lovingly when hers was brought.

'What dear, busy girls,' she said, taking a hand of each in her own. 'I can fancy exactly how things have gone under the dainty, willing hands of our two maids.'

The maids exchanged plances.

'Is your dinner ready?'

'Yes. We're waiting for Harvey to bring some fruit.'

Then sit down and take breath for a moment. I am sure such workers must be tired. I know there are some things about it that you would not choose, but I

am not at all certain, dears, that I am sorry you are given this little opportunity of faithful service. In my thought I have followed you all the morning, picturing to myself the painstaking care with which you are helping in keeping bright the dear home.'

'And all the week,' Aunt Janet hadn't a preachy way, merely a pleasant, chatty one, 'you will keep in mind—in bringing your best to this work, which to some would seem a succession of trifles, you are serving as acceptably as if the things were greater things. It is really, you know, a helping of the Lord in keeping this great world of his running. For, all over the land are homes which are made sweet and bright by hands, which, like yours, are doing as unto the Lord.'

Ruth was gazing into her sister's eyes in a consternation born of a sudden rush of new and startling ideas.

'Oh, Aunt Janet,' she broke out, as her aunt paused, 'you wouldn't talk so if you knew.'

'We haven't been doing things that way—'

'We've been neglecting and shirking and slighting things all the morning.'

Harvey came in without the fruit.

'They hadn't any at Russel's,' he said, 'and I didn't think it worth while to go on to Hart's. I thought you could get out some canned stuff and make that do.'

'Yes, yes, that's what we've been doing all day,' said Ruth, 'making things do and letting things go.'

The three sat down to their dinner with sober faces.

'As unto the Lord,' Ruth repeated the words under her breath. 'It frightens me. Aunt Janet seemed to spring it on us, but after all it's the same thing mother talks about—that all we do ought to be so. And think what work we have been offering to the Lord to-day. How do we dare?'

'Well, there's no use in our all being down about it,' said Emily. 'We haven't done well, but we can. We have made a poor beginning, but we can begin over. Now, I'm not going to let such work as that stand any longer than I can help. I'm going to stay at home this afternoon and do it over.'

'And lose the party?'

'Yes. It only serves us right—I mean "us" if you are going to stay, too.'

'I will.'

'Good for you,' said Harvey, admiringly. 'I'm with you all the time, for it's been me as much as you. I won't make you keep calling on me for wood. I'll set the woodshed straight and I'll walk till I find some fresh fruit.'

'There is a real satisfaction in it, after all,' said Ruth, as late in the day they gladly sat down for a little rest.

'Yes, my mind is full of cleaned-out cupboards, shining glass and silver and white dish towels. And of well-swept corners and no dust anywhere.'

'We shan't dread going into the kitchen now,' with a sigh of content.

'And we'll have Aunt Janet out to tea.'

'This certainly is "drudgery divine,"' said Aunt Janet, as her chair was drawn to the table.

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