

in front of an immense fire, which is kept up for fully a month, unless, as frequently happens, the patient dies in the meantime. The late King of Siam lost his favorite wife in this way, having tried in vain to abolish this foolish custom.—The Presbyterian, Australia.

One Day's Sowing.

(By Annie L. Hannah, in 'Our Sunday Afternoon.')

'Miss Susan, Dr. Lane passed me on the street just now, and asked me to tell you that your sister isn't feeling very well to-day, and would like to have you come out and stay with her,' and having delivered her message, Jessie went over to the glowing stove, and spread her hands out to receive the warmth. "It is bitterly cold!" she exclaimed. But receiving no reply whatever, she turned her head over her shoulder to find that Miss Susan had dropped into a chair, and was sitting with a most dejected and hopeless expression on her face.

'Why, Miss Susan, what's the matter?' she asked.

'Matter enough, child, the land knows! Why, I had just a little mite more'n I knew how to do to-day as it was! Here's Josiah's folks coming on the evening train to-morrow, and me with all the getting ready for them to do. There's the house to sweep down, pie and cake to make, the best rooms to put in order, and I did want to manage a chicken pie. Josiah does so admire a chicken pie!'

'I'm ever so sorry,' said Jessie, regretfully, "and I would offer to go to Mrs. Macy myself, but—" hesitating for an instant, "she wouldn't care to have me, I'm afraid."

'Oh, you needn't be so polite, child; I know just how cranky Maria is. Of course she wouldn't want you; I'm the only one who can do anything with her when she is ailing. Of course I can do the home work to-morrow, but I was counting some on going into the city to that missionary meeting. I am a delegate, you know, and I was setting some store on hearing that returned missionary. I was going to take the train back that Josiah would be on. But there! some folk's missions are at home, and it looks about as though mine was this time. I'll get my things on and be ready when the stage passes. Thank you, child, for bringing the message.'

'I only wish that it had been a more pleasant one,' replied Jessie. 'Is there anything I can do for you, Miss Susan?'

'Yes, there is. If you will tell your mother that I can't go to-morrow, and ask her to appoint some one in my place, it will save me the trouble of doing it myself. And if you'll take these curtains and fixings up to the best room, it will save me steps. I'm thankful I got them all done up. I shan't have that to do to-morrow.'

'You're a good child,' as the girl returned from her journey upstairs. 'No, there's nothing more, thank you, and now there comes the stage. Yes, you may lock the door and put the key under the mat. That saves me carrying it. You won't forget to tell your mother, will you? Good-bye.'

'She's the bravest and best little woman that I ever saw!' exclaimed Jessie to herself as she stood watching the stage drive away, 'and I do think that Mrs. Macy is too selfish for anything! She never asks if it is convenient for her to come, just says she wants her. The idea of her having to give up the meeting to which she has been looking forward for months! It's too, too bad! I wish that I—'

But there she paused suddenly, clasped her hands as though some delightful idea

had occurred to her, and went hurrying down the village street, her face dimpling with smiles.

'I will lay the grand idea before mother first!' she said to herself; 'she will be sure to know if it will be all right; then if she says 'yes,' I'll hunt up my army.'

'Mother! mother!' cried Jessie a few moments later, entering the house. 'O mother, where are you?'

'Here in the study, dear. Why, what is it?' as Jessie ran in flushed and breathless. The minister was there also, sitting at his table, and he looked up as she came in, asking, 'Is anything wrong, little daughter?'

'Yes,' Jessie replied, laughing; 'Mrs. Macy is all wrong. Won't you preach her a sermon on selfishness, father?'

'My dear! my dear!'

'Yes, I know all about judging, dearie, but only just listen!' And then she poured out her story, and put her question, ending with, 'and now, mother, dear, do you think that we might undertake it? Think of poor Miss Susan's disappointment!'

For a few moments Mrs. Nash thought the matter over, then she replied, looking up into Jessie's pleading eyes: 'Yes, my dear, I think that you may. 'You need not cry,' with a smile. 'You say that the bed clothing and curtains are ready in each room, and as for the cooking materials, I am quite willing to take the responsibility of giving you permission to go to the store-room. The chicken pie I will come up and make myself. So run away, little girl, and gather your clan.'

And Jessie did run away, and within an hour Miss Susan's quiet house was invaded by a horde of merry, laughing girls.

'Now, friends,' said Jessie, from her stand half way up the stairs, 'this is the situation. The house must be thoroughly swept, the bed made up and the curtains hung. Then in the kitchen there are pies and cakes to make; the chickens to get ready for the pie, and crust to prepare. You can take your choice, only the cooking, friends, must be of the best. Miss Susan must not be mortified by having tough crust and heavy cakes to offer to her guests.'

'She did not mention bread, but I am sure that she must have forgotten it, for, on peeping into the box, I find it almost empty. Now, do not allow modesty to keep you silent. Who can make perfectly delicious cake?' And she lifted a pad and pencil from the step.

'My sponge cake has received favorable mention, ma'am,' said Laura Dana, with down-cast eyes and an air of mock humility.

'A superior sponge cake,' wrote Jessie on her pad. 'Next!'

'My father says my crust is fit for a king.'

'Pie crust by Nanny Roy. Well?'

'I'll fry a batch of crullers.'

'Fanny Mason—crullers.'

'I can make nice ginger cookies, and children always like them. They keep fresh, too, and we might as well bake up enough to last Miss Susan all the time that they are here.'

'She wouldn't be satisfied without a raisin cake, I am sure, so I will undertake that,' chimed in Dora Tracy.

'It is too late for bread to rise to-day, and she would not have time to bake it in the morning if we set it to-night,' said Alice Brown. 'I know that mother has some almost ready to bake. I'm going to run home and beg it of her. We can have shortcake for supper, and I'll save out enough to make some sweet bread. Mine is ever so good, if I do say it, who shouldn't!'

'I cannot brew or bake,' put in Ruthie Hall, 'but I can sweep and dust and make

rooms sweet and cheerful. May I take the upstairs part, Jessie?'

'To be sure, my love. And now, my people, scatter! I'm going to attend to the chicken, boil a tongue I have discovered, and pop that great ham into the kettle. How many helpers will you need, Ruthie?'

'Three will be enough. We can each take a room, and when they are swept and dusted, while one is doing the halls and stairs two of us can be hanging the curtains and making up the beds, after which we will fill the pitchers. That will take till lunch time, and while we're eating we can compare notes.'

And so they all went to work, those light-hearted, happy girls. They had formed themselves into a nameless society for the purpose of making the world a little more pleasant place for people to live in, and this was one of their ways of doing it. They worked faithfully and earnestly till noon, then assembled in the cheerful kitchen, and while they opened the baskets which each had brought they told what had been accomplished and counted up what remained to do.

'We must finish by five, for the stage comes about that time, and Miss Susan will be certain to be in it,' said Jessie, as she stood up and began collecting the scraps. 'There comes mother! and now for the chicken pie.'

It was quick work after that, and the little house was filled with a combination of delight odors. Many hands made light work, and by half past four everything was done, and the bright-faced girls formed a procession and trooped off on a tour of inspection.

'How sweet and dainty and fresh!' came in quick exclamations from the damsels who had worked below stairs as they viewed the work of their sisters from above.

'How delicious looking! Oh, for a taste of those dainties!' cried the little housemaids as they passed before the table loaded down with good things.

'Come, girls, the stage is in sight,' cried Jessie. And like the princesses in the fairy tale, they vanished from the house.

And Miss Susan? Poor, tired, disappointed Miss Susan, what of her?

She had had a hard day, and was thankful to be coming home. But she was chilled through with her long, cold drive, and had before her the prospect of a cold house and a bitter disappointment to look bravely in the face; for, like the little heroine which she was, she had put herself to one side and thought only of the fussy, exacting invalid to whose comfort she had gone to minister. And so, as she got down from the stage, she walked slowly, almost reluctantly, up the path, and taking the key from beneath the rug, opened the door and entered the hall.

'Well, I never did know the house to keep so warm in such weather! How pleased I am!' and she gave a little comfortable shrug of her shoulders. 'And how good it smells! Any one would think I'd been doing all to-morrow's baking! There's no use talking, I'm that disappointed that I could cry! Why, I believe that I am crying!' as a tear suddenly rolled down her cheek.

There were other tears so near and ready to follow that it was with difficulty that Miss Susan found her way to the kitchen door, and then, when she had finally managed to get it open, and had looked in, the sight which met her eyes held her spell-bound for a long minute, and then the tears came in earnest, a great refreshing flood of them. But not tears of disappointment; oh, no, tears of heartfelt joy and happiness, not so much for the fact that the meeting of to-morrow was possible, as that somebody