

Reading to Mamma

(Miss Lucy A. Yendes, in 'New York Observer'.)

'I wonder how I can make "Sunshine in the home,"' thought Harry Lane, after listening to a bright little woman who had been asked to talk on that subject in his school that day. Among other things, she had said:

'Don't wait for something big to do, but find the little things that will make a great many people happy, every day. Try to make your lives daily "Sunshine," for all you meet or live with. Never mind if you can't contribute money to the suffering in foreign lands; you can all and always do something right in your own homes to make somebody happier, to help some one be better, to make life seem far brighter and more worth living. Money is a good helper in "Sunshine" work; but a great deal can be done without it. You know the song that says of a smile: "It's worth a million dollars and it doesn't cost a cent." And you can all smile, even when you can't do anything else to make things easier for some one. But don't let the smile end it, if you can do other things, too, for we can all lift a little on the load that the home-makers carry for us. We can help keep things bright and orderly in the home; and we can all find some part of the work that we can do, for it takes a great deal of work to keep even a small home in order and comfortable for us to stay in.'

Now Harry had reached 'home,' three little rooms over the corner grocery in their small village, and as he went in, he noticed how very orderly it all was, and how neat. The tiny kitchen, the sitting room, with its couchbed, where he slept, and his mother's bedroom, were all marvels of neatness.

Mrs. Lane was out, gone to the tailor's with her week's work, and she might have to wait an hour or more for her week's pay. She always took her bundle Friday afternoon, so as to have the money for Saturday's marketing.

'Just the thing,' said Harry aloud, as he bustled about in the house, getting things together for supper. 'She shan't carry that package any more. I'll tell her to have it ready when school's out, then I'll take it for her.'

He set the table, put the potatoes over to cook, water in the teakettle, and some on the coffee in the coffee pot, which he set to the back of the stove. Then he took up a book to read, but was so delighted with what he had done, for he hadn't been accustomed to hurrying home right from school nor to getting things ready for supper if his mother was out, although he was ready to help if she was there to start things, that he ran to the window to see if she was not in sight.

Yes, there she was, just turning the corner, a block away, and down stairs he rushed to meet her and carry her basket for her. How glad she was to see her sturdy nine-year-old son, and to hear him say, as he took the basket: 'Mamma, you ought to have waited for me, so I could help you carry the big bundle.' And how cheery it seemed, when they got upstairs to find the supper cooking, and everything so cosy.

'Now take off your things, mamma, and

I'll put them away, while you lie down on the couch and rest.'

Surprised and pleased, Mrs. Lane did as she was requested, feeling glad of the unusual opportunity so offered, and Harry folded the worn shawl carefully, and put the rather shabby bonnet in its box. And then, after looking at the fire and the supper, he returned to the sitting room, and opening his reader, began to read over his Monday's lesson. His mother enjoyed this so much that he proposed to read aloud to her every evening, while she sewed, and as Mrs. Lane had but very little time for this form of pleasure, it made the evenings seem like the best part of the day for her. She selected the books and magazine articles, generally, and they talked about them as Harry read, each of them gaining interest and Harry's pleasure more than doubling when he saw how happy it made his mother.

Nor did that end it, for as he learned to keep his eyes open for opportunities, they multiplied, and he managed to keep a stock of bright, short articles ready, sometimes merely a good joke which he clipped from a newspaper, or some thing that he had written up from the day's happenings. Sometimes it was a new receipt for cooking some favorite or new dish, and they would try it together. Again, it might be only a bit of news from the daily paper; but he noticed how much lighter his mother's step was, how much brighter her eyes seemed; and when one day she said: 'Harry, you are a great comfort to me,' he felt glad that he had found out how to be such a good companion for his mother, by reading to her.

Are You Like Him?

I. Peter iii., 15.

'What church do you attend?' was once asked of a bright young fellow, doing business in one of our large cities.

'Oh, I just run around,' he answered, gaily. 'I don't understand the difference between the churches; in fact, there is a great deal in the Bible itself that I don't understand, and until I do, of course, I can't join any church.'

'How many hours a day do you spend studying this matter?' asked his questioner.

'Hours?' he repeated, in surprise.

'Well, then, minutes?'

The young man was dumb.

'Ah!' said his companion, with patient sadness, 'not one! If you thought a knowledge of geology necessary to your success in life or astronomy or shorthand, you would not think of spending less than one hour a day in its study, perhaps two, perhaps three; and you would not expect to know or understand it without that exertion. But the knowledge of God, of Jesus Christ, of salvation—the highest and deepest of all knowledge—you sit around and wait for, as if it would come like a flash of lightning.'—'Our Young Folks.'

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Saved in a Basket, or Daph and Her Charge.

CHAPTER VIII.—Continued.

Daph understood his meaning but too well. She had hoped on, determinately; but now the hour of awful certainty had come, and she could not bear it. She gave one loud scream, and fell senseless on the floor. The wild yell that burst from the anguished heart of the negress, rang through the house, and Mrs. Ray and Mary were at the door in a moment, followed by the terrified children. Little Louise dropped down beside Daph, and began to cry piteously, while Charlie flew at Captain Jones like a young lion, loudly exclaiming, 'The naughty man has killed dear Daffy, and I'll punish him.'

While Mrs. Ray and Mary were making every effort to recall poor Daph to consciousness, Charlie continued his attack upon the captain, with sturdy foot, clenched hand, and sharp teeth, until the honest sailor was actually obliged to protect himself, by putting the child forcibly from the room, and firmly locking the door.

Perfectly infuriated, Charlie flew into the street, screaming, 'they've killed my Daffy!—the wicked, wicked man.'

Several persons gathered round the enraged child, and a young physician, who was passing, stopped to find out the cause of the disturbance. Charlie's words, 'She lies dead there!—the wicked man has killed her,' caught the attention of Dr. Bates, and he eagerly asked, 'Where, where, child?'

Charlie pointed towards the house, and the doctor entered, without ceremony, Charlie closely following him. His loud knock was answered by Captain Jones, whose cautious manner of unlocking the door seemed, to the young physician, a most suspicious circumstance.

Charlie no sooner caught sight of his enemy, than he leaped furiously upon him. The strong sailor received him in his muscular arms, and there held him, a most unwilling prisoner, while he watched the proceedings going on about poor Daph, and rendered assistance where he could.

Dr. Bates ordered her clothes to be instantly loosened, and then commanded Mrs. Ray to lay her flat on the floor, while he proceeded to apply his lancet to her arm.

While this process was going on, the clock on a neighboring steeple struck the hour of twelve. Captain Jones looked hastily at his great silver watch, and saw that it was indeed mid-day; and he had not a minute to spare, as the 'Martha Jane' was by this time quite ready to set sail, and only waiting for her captain.

He hurriedly placed a little parcel on the mantel-piece, and with one long, sorrowful look at poor Daph, and a hasty farewell to Mrs. Ray and the children, he left the house.

It was long before Daph returned to consciousness, and when her eyes once more opened they were wild with fever and anguish. She declared, however, that she was quite well, and would have no one about her; she longed to be alone to struggle with her great sorrow. The children would not leave her; but it was in