

The Little Tag.

(By Hattie Louise Jerome, in 'Wellspring'.)

Amy! Amy! Wait for me! Down the hill came little Emma, her sunny curls flying, and her small determined feet making a quick patter, patter down the brick sidewalk. If an artist could have painted a picture of Emma as she flashed by, catching her breath in quick gasps that brought a bright flush to her cheeks, Amy would have thought it one of the prettiest pictures she ever had seen, but because Emma was her own little, hindering, teasing sister, Amy did not notice the beauty at all.

'Oh, dear!' she cried, stamping her foot with vexation, 'Emma is tagging us. What shall we do?'

'Tell her to go back,' suggested Sadie. Sadie had no little brother or sister of her

dozen children playing in a great load of fresh white sand.

'Emma'll stop and play in the sand and forget all about us,' Amy told her conscience as she and Sadie slipped through a gap in the fence. But that was just what little Emma did not do, although Johnnie and the others invited her to stay.

'Can't,' she gasped. 'Got to show Amy somefin,' and through the gap in the fence she tumbled, scratching the plump, dimpled hand that held the 'somefin' and bruising her little elbow, but keeping on and on in the direction she supposed Amy had taken. Up one street and down another she trudged, never doubting in her baby mind but that if she kept on walking, no matter in what direction, she would sometime overtake Amy.

An old lady whose path chanced to be the same which Emma's fancy led her, noticed the tired child, and said:—

I got to go show Amy somefin,' and thinking one of the ladies coming must be Emma's mother, the policeman let her go on.

Once a heavy horse almost stepped on the wee girl, and another time the swift electric car was stopped just in time to save her but for the most part she kept out of danger, for had not dear papa and mamma prayed the heavenly Father to guide and guard and protect their darling ever since she was a wee baby?

Finally Emma saw two girls who looked a little like Amy and Sadie, and followed them out of the business section and among the quiet homes of the city. When she overtook them and found it wasn't her sister, Emma began to cry, but still trudged on until she came to a house that looked like Aunt Myra's, where she had often visited with mamma. She went up to the door, intending to make a call, but when she rang the bell a little dog inside barked so fiercely that she was frightened and ran down the steps into the beautiful garden at the side of the house, and slipped into a little vine-covered arbor there, hid away and cried and cried until she fell fast asleep.

She awoke very hungry, for it was long past noon; so she climbed down off the arbor seat and started to go out of the garden, but she lost her way and came to the kitchen door instead. The cook was standing near the window.

'I want cookie,' said Emma, simply.

'You do?' laughed the cook. 'It's a purty small beggar ye are. There don't be no cookies in this house, but here's a chunk of sponge cake your mother wouldn't moind your catin'; and she gave the pretty child a generous piece of cake, never doubting but that she was one of the neighbor's children.

'Here's a sup of milk for ye, too,' said the good-hearted cook, pouring out a cupful when she saw how eagerly the baby was devouring the cake. 'Shure childer need a good bit of fillin', that they do. An' where are yer goin' now?' she inquired, as Emma, rested and well fed, started off.

'Got to go show Amy somef'—but the word died away, the 'somefin' was no longer in her hand. Where could it be? Emma searched the kitchen from end to end.

'What was it ye had, darlint?' inquired the cook.

'Picshure to show Amy,' answered Emma, still looking about her.

'A picture, was it? Likcly ye dropped it on the path acomin' up,' said the cook. 'Here, let me wash the crumbs off yer face, dear, an' freshen yer hands a bit, an' then we'll go an' look.'

It was a sweet face to wash, and the sunny ringlets would tempt a harder heart than cook's to roll them and brush them over her finger, and when Emma parted with her at the gate she did not look in the least like the little lost child she really was.

'Where is it yer live?' asked the cook.

'Down vere,' replied Emma, sweetly, pointing down the street; and after making her promise to come and see her again, the cook let her go and came slowly back through the garden. At the arbor she went in to pick up a little handkerchief she saw there, and close beside it lay a beautiful little miniature of a child of many years ago.

'Shure an' it must belong to the choild,' said the cook, studying the face. 'It looks a bit loike her, too.' She hurried to the gate, but Emma was out of sight, still trudging on, hoping to find Amy, although the 'somefin' was lost.

Meanwhile Amy and Sadie had spent the morning just as it had pleased them, with no



'I WANT TO SHOW AMY SOMEFIN!'

own. 'I'd just tell her she couldn't come with us.'

'Wouldn't do a bit of good; she'd just coax and tease and cry—the little tag!'

But Sadie thought best to try.

'Go back, Emma,' she said; 'you can't come where we are going, it's too far.'

'But I wan't—show—Amy some—somefin!' gasped Emma, as she ran.

'We can't get rid of her!' scolded Amy; for although both older girls had been walking along, the child was overtaking them.

'Let's skip her!' suggested Sadie. 'Let's go through Johnnie Ellis's yard and down that alley and through Mr. Harthan's store. She can't follow round all those corners, and we can't have a bit good time if we have to have her tagging us all the morning; come on!'

They were very near Johnnie Ellis's gate. Sadie slipped in and Amy followed, although her conscience pricked her when she glanced back and saw the breathless baby and thought of her disappointment.

In Johnnie's back yard there were half a

'Aren't you walking a long ways, dear? Hadn't you better go home, now?'

'No, got to show Amy some—somefin,' replied little Emma in her shy way.

And the old lady, thinking the child must know where she was going and had, perhaps, been sent to 'show Amy somefin,' turned in to her own home and let the child go on. Once she went through a dirty street where there were rude children and idle women all along the sidewalk, and they, seeing her fresh little gown and pretty shoes, knew she must be a little runaway and tried to detain her, hoping to gain a reward by taking her home; but Emma, tired now beyond reason or coaxing, only shrieked and screamed and cried.

'Got to go, got to go show Amy somefin!' until they were glad to let her alone.

Down into the hurried business section of the city she wandered, and a great policeman stopped her to ask, 'See here, little girl, do you know where your mother is?'

'Yes,' nodded Emma, 'back vere,' pointing back the direction which she had come; 'but