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Old Dutch Cleanser

I told her I didn't mind a mite if she hooked him onto a church. Say, Jim, you don't think—you don't think Baby Ben will die because I give her his name, do you?"

Jim glanced up from a deliberate

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study of the application blank and its accompanying letter.

"My goodness, May! don't be nutty! It's goin' to take more than connectin' up with a church to put that little rascal out o' commission. I don't know but what I'm glad you done it. My grandfather was a church member an' so was pa and ma. They both died when I was a little shaver, you know, an' nobody ever bothered much about me after that. But there are lots o' things to drag a feller down nowadays. I'd sorter hate to see Baby Ben turn out bad. It can't do him no harm to belong to this Cradle Roll, as fur as I kin see, an' mebbe it may do him a little good. Who was the lady that give you the lift?"

"She said her name was Travis. Here's her card." Mrs. Bennett produced the cardboard slip, "Eleanor Travis." "She was real pleasant-spoken, though she hadn't a mite o' style."

"Travis? That's the name o' one o' the owners o' the foundry where I work. Stiff old codger, but straight goods, the men sav. If she's any relation to him, she must be a big bug."

"Well, she isn't then, fur she don't look nur act tony. She's goin' to bring a certifficut in a day or two, she says, to show that Baby Ben really belongs to the Cradle Roll, you know."

Mr. Bennett surveyed his small son with humorous intentness, then roared with laughter.

"Better mind your P's and Q's, young man," he said. "You're the only one that's got any claim to religion in this family. An' your ma's got you fastened on to a church good an' early, let me tell you!"

Miss Travis brought the certificate as she had promised.

"Father says your husband is employed in our foundry," she said, cordially, "so, you see, we ought to know each other. And I've found the nicest kind of a cook-book, full of explicit directions. You'll let me give it to you, will you not, because I'm so glad to have Baby Ben for the hundredth baby? And now I want to tell you the loveliest plan. We're going to have a reception for the Cradle Roll babies and their mothers next Friday afternoon in the Sunday School room. There's to be music and singing and light refreshments, and an informal discussion of the things mothers like to talk about. You'll come and bring Baby Ben, will you not?"

"But I don't know where the church is."

"You can go with me. I'll call for you. It's only a short walk. And you will meet some of the most delightful people."

Mrs. Bennett promised. After her guest had gone she bundled Baby Ben into the go-cart, and hurried to the

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nearest five-and-ten-cent store, where she invested in yards and yards of lace and pale blue ribbon, a small gilt frame, and a box of stationery.

Returning home, she framed the pretty certificate, hung it on the wall above the kitchen table, and, sitting down, scribbled the following letter:—

Dear Ma:
This is to let you know that I am well and like my new home first-rate. I don't know what you will say to hear I am getting reel Sober and Religyus. It would be a good thing if Pa and you took Patten by me in this.

I have got a reel pretty certiferate for Baby Ben all framed in Gold, and I have an Invite to go to a Cradle Roll Recepshun next Friday. The Cradle Roll is part of a Church.

Miss Travis is the dauter of one of Jim's Bosses. She lives up the Street a ways, but she don't put on no Style, and nobody would ever know she was wurth anything to look at her.

She is real nice, tho, and has give me a Cook Book almost like the one I had at chester.

She is going to stop and get me the day of the Recepshun, and I shell ware my green Silk. I've took the Seams in, so it don't show no Spots, and the Tighter the Skirts the Bigger the Style, so I feel reel Easy.

I dident know what Jim would say about Me getting so good all at once, but he is Easy led, and he seems kinder pleased over my New Noshuns.

Baby Ben is reel cute, and of course he's too littel to know what his Parunts are doing.

I feel better since I got these New idees, so Good-by from your Dauter May.

Jim studied the dainty certificate with considerable interest on his return.

"It's quite a complete little jigger, ain't it?" he said. He's hooked up good an' proper, all right."

"I'm goin' to a reception Friday and take Baby Ben along. Miss Travis give me the invite. It's for all the Cradle Roll mothers, she says."

Jim surveyed his wife in silent admiration for a moment, then spoke with heartfelt conviction: "My eye! but you travel some, May! Say, I've been inquirin' around some, an' I find your Miss Travis is one o' the nabobesses. If you go with her, are you sure you've got the right kind o' things to wear Friday?"

"Sure," said Mrs. Bennett, serenely. "Don't you ever lose no sleep over me, Jim. I've got a tight skirt an' a big hat. An' that's all that really matters this year. An' I'm fixin' Baby Ben up till he's a wonder!"

"I wish you could have seen her, mother," poor little Miss Travis said with flushed face on the evening of the reception for Cradle Roll mothers. "She wore the tightest skirt and the biggest hat! And she talked and talked! She told all about how she's 'letting Baby Ben cut his teeth on a pickle,' and how he 'eats pretty near everything his father eats a'ready, an' him only seven months old!' And she described her family relations from the time of the Flood. And that blessed baby—she'd swathed him in blue ribbon and lace till you



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could hardly see anything but the tip of his dear little nose!"

"Never mind, dear. She's ignorant, I suppose. Perhaps she will soon learn better. These meetings may be the very thing she needs."

"Learn better? That kind of person never learns" said Miss Travis with conviction.

She would have been astonished could she have peeped into the little brown house just then and heard a resolute mother explaining to a puzzled husband and a good-natured baby:—

"Here, Jim, don't you give him no more of that boiled cabbage. He's goin' back to milk, or mebbe bread and milk, for a few months. And it's no use your crying for that old, green pickle, Baby Ben, 'cause I've bought you an ivory ring to chew on, and you ain't goin' to run no risk of gettin' the colic. There was a real nice gray-haired old party set next to me at the reception, an' she told me a whole lot about kids. She's had eight, an' every one of 'em's livin', an' most of 'ems got children o' their own. We ain't never had but this one kid, an' cause I've had good luck with him thus fur ain't no sign I know it all."

"Did you have a good time?" Jim asked.

(To be Continued.)

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