

Things went on from bad to worse till the morning when our story opens, when Nell declared her intention of returning to the city to live.

'But,' said the practical Sam, 'if you return to the city, it will not be to visit and have a good time, you will have to work, and I am afraid your swell friends will not be so ready to welcome you.'

'Sam Bradley, that is just like you throwing stones at my friends. Do you suppose, if I am a governess or companion in some grand home, my friends will think any the less of me?'

Sam was silent, but not convinced.

No remonstrance from the home circle was of any avail, so one fine June morning found Nell, with all her earthly belongings, and a five-dollar bill, starting out to seek her fortune. Arrived in the city, she allowed the first cabman she met to take her valise, and, giving him the number of Mrs. Lindsay's house, she seated herself with great pride to enjoy the drive. A few minutes brought her to the Lindsay's home, but what was her surprise to find windows and doors all boarded up.

'Them folks is off for the hot weather, I calculate,' the driver remarked.

Here, surely was a muddle. Nell had intended remaining with Mrs. Lindsay for a few days, thinking she would be able to assist her in procuring the desired situation. The cabman aroused her with, 'where now, miss?'

'Where now, indeed.' She had no idea, so in her distress she confided in her driver, with the result that in twenty minutes she was trying to make herself feel at home in a very second-rate boarding-house. Her 'air-castle' had received a shock, it is true, but she was endeavoring to make the best of it. Having secured a morning paper she searched the want column in vain to find any one in need of either a governess or a companion. But with great determination she dressed herself, and went out to seek her fortune. However, she had to admit that life was not nearly so rose-colored as when she had driven to the station that morning, for in all that big city there was not one to smile a welcome or to utter a kind word of encouragement. Since she could not be a companion or governess, she must try something else, in fact, she would be a shop-girl.

Store after store was visited, but one and all declared they required no extra help during the summer months. The next day was spent with no better results. In one miserable little store she was offered two dollars a week,

'But,' said Nell, 'I have to pay two and a half for my board.'

'I am sorry, my girl,' was the reply, 'but we can secure more girls than we require for that amount, from those who live at home, and have no board to pay.'

The next day, when Nell had about given up in despair, she secured a place in a departmental store at the very modest salary of three dollars per week. That left her exactly fifty cents to spend when her board was paid. Shop life was soon robbed of any sentiment she had ever indulged in about it, and hard, monotonous work, with considerable fault-finding and disagreeableness, became Nell's portion.

During a more than ordinarily trying day, in August Nell looked up from her work to see Marion Ford and her mother entering the store. With one bound she was beside them, exclaiming in tones of real joy.

'Oh, Marion, I am so glad to see you!'

The young lady addressed looked Nell over in quiet contempt, bowed a cold recognition, and passed on, but as she stood at the

glove counter Nell heard her quite distinctly explain to her mother,

'Oh, it is that little country girl who stayed with the Lindsays last year.'

'How awkward,' was the mother's reply, in tones of disgust.

This proved to Nell the proverbial 'last straw,' and laying her head down she wept bitter homesick tears, and somehow the words of the children's hymn kept ringing in her ears,

'Jesus bids us shine,
You in your wee corner,
And I in mine.'

It struck her as it had never done before that here was the real reason of her trouble. God had given her such a pleasant wee corner in which to shine, but she had foolishly left it and then everything went wrong. That night found our Nell doing some good, quiet thinking, with the result that the next morning the train for Sunnyside carried a very pale and weary and much subdued little girl. It was twilight when she reached the farm, and as she peeped in at the kitchen window a pleasant sight greeted her eye. Mother, father and Sam were seated at a late supper, and the perfect cleanliness and air of comfort and plenty struck Nell with a feeling of rest and pleasure.

'You are sure, Sam, lad, there was no mail from my bairn to-night?' Mrs. Hardie was asking.

As Sam replied, 'None to-night, aunt,' a stray tear was seen to flow down the dear mother's cheek.

The look of that troubled face touched Nell as nothing had ever done before, and with a rush she was into her mother's arms. Not one word of censure was spoken, for the pale, weary face told its own tale of punishment. Only words of welcome and rejoicing were offered, and Sam tried his best to make the home-coming as bright and happy as possible. Indeed, they did their best to make a heroine of her, but Nell was not deceived, her hard lesson had been learnt, and as the tired but happy girl sought her own room that night, her prayer went up from a full heart.

'Make me ever content to shine for thee in this wee corner, in my own dear home.'

Is the Bird Less Safe Than Thou?

There's a bird that swings from the branches tall,

With never a thought he may faint or fall.
I stood last night on a tottering stone
While I cried in pain, 'I am all alone!
And my way is perilous, fraught with fear,
Will there no one come, is there no one near?'

How the lightnings flash and the thunder roars,

While the rain from a great black cloud outpours!

But the singer chirped from the swaying bough—

'Is the bird less safe in the storm than thou?
We feel as safe in the roaring blast
As at other times when the rain is passed.'
And I cried, 'Little bird, thou indeed art right.'

And my soul grew calm and banished fright,
For I felt that God, in his tender love,
Had sent this thought from his realm above;
And I wept in shame. Am I then to fall
When an hour is dark? Shall my moan and wail

Be heard above little birdling's song,
Though the storm may come and the day be long?

And I knocked in haste at my Father's door,
And he cried, 'Come in, thou shalt fear no more.'

Then my soul grew strong. Though the tottering rock

And the angry blast at my courage mock,
I will sing thy praise, Father, God on high,
While I rest content if thou art nigh.

—Anon.

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