

Mother's Evenings.

(By Sydney Dayre.)

'Emily!'

Two young girls put their heads in at the front door.

'Yes, I'm here,' called an answering voice from the sitting-room.

'At home for the evening?'

'Yes, come in.'

'That's where you make your mistake, though, my dear,' said Janet, as the two friends entered. 'We're going to claim you for the evening. It is rare good luck to find you at home.'

'What am I to do?'

'Just come with us over to Mrs. Carter's and try their new piano. They've bought one for little Belle, you know, and she's going to commence taking lessons at once.'

'Well, you can surely try it without me.'

'No, Mrs. Carter specially asks us to bring you. She thinks no one can play like you.'

'What can I do for you before I go, mother?' asked Emily of a frail-looking woman who sat near a window.

'Oh, nothing more than usual, my dearie.'

'I'll tell Jane to stay within call. Here's your knitting. I'll light your lamp before I go.'

'No, I like it better without. The light sometimes hurts my eyes.'

'I'll lower the window for you. Not? — then here is your shawl in case you should be chilly. Good-bye—I won't be late.'

'What a dear thoughtful girl you are of your mother, Emily,' said Gertrude. 'You think of her comfort in every little thing. I should never be so faithful to my mother, I'm sure, if she were weakly. I don't mean I shouldn't have the heart for it, but that my scattery brain wouldn't hold so much consideration.'

'Mother is so unselfish,' said Emily. 'She surely deserves all I can do for her and much more. She always insists on my going out.'

'How delightful! How delightful!' Mrs. Carter beamed with admiration as the three young girls did their best for her in the way of music. 'Really, I have not realized how hungry I have been for music all these years. And it seems to me, my dears, that girls with such gifts as yours, ought to make the most of them.'

The girls modestly disclaimed.

'Yes, in the way of giving pleasure to others. You might make it a real blessing in such a small town as this. Now—how would it be if you should come here every week for a kind of musical evening?'

'Very pleasant, I'm sure,' said Janet.

'Inviting in some of our friends. Such a treat to them. And I'm sure it would be of great benefit to you, in spurring you on to keep up your practise.'

Mrs. Carter's enthusiasm was contagious, and the girls lengthened out the evening talking over the new plan.

Emily carried it to her mother the next morning, receiving the sympathy which never failed her in any new pursuit or pleasure.

And Emily went to look for some new music, not noticing the little sigh with which mother dismissed the subject.

On the day following the next musical gathering at Mrs. Carter's a visitor was announced.

'Good afternoon, Mrs. March. Ah, there you are, Emily. What a fine treat you gave us last evening. And Mrs. Carter says you are going to give us some music every week.'

'That's what she says,' says Emily, 'but I think that's too often.'

'Not a bit, Not a bit,' with energetic gravity. 'It's your bounden duty, my child,

to make the most of your beautiful gift. And it was along that same line that I came to talk to you. We're getting up a little entertainment for the children to give at Christmas. And we want you, Emily — you're so willing to be helpful in everything and so well able—to train them a little in the choruses.'

'Let me see—my evenings are pretty well taken up,' said Emily. 'Saturday, choir practice; Monday, Literary Club; Tuesday, music at Mrs. Carter's; Wednesday, prayer meeting; and Thursday and Friday, either the girls are in or there's something going on.'

'A good list,' the caller nodded, approvingly. 'Well, set your own evening, my dear. I'm sure your mother will spare you to us. How I should rejoice in having such a daughter — always busy with some good good work or other.'

The rather pathetic expression usual on the mother's patient face had deepened a little as the talk went on. She always enjoyed the few evenings in which Emily's various duties and pleasures did not call her out, and here were schemes that bid fair to put an end to such of them as remained.

She was glad and thankful to see Emily so employed and so appreciated. She was proud of her talents and rejoiced at their being put to such excellent uses, and yet — with what weary loneliness stretched out the evenings in which Emily's sweetness, brightness and talent were expended for the benefit of other persons and places than home and mother.

But what could she do? Emily enjoyed it, her friends enjoyed it.

'Emily,' said Gertrude, 'come in and let us try that new song.'

The girls were on their way home from prayer-meeting.

'I suppose I might for a short time,' said Emily, hesitating a little, as they passed the turn which led to her home.

'I do not see any light in the front of your house, Emily.'

The remark was made by an aunt of Gertrude's, who had lately come to visit at her home.

'No, Miss Barclay. Mother's eyes are troubling her this autumn, and she does not like a light.'

'Can't she get out, evenings?'

'No, ma'am, she's not very strong.'

'Is she alone?'

Emily felt the hot color mounting to her face.

'Why, no — that is, Jane is somewhere about the house. Mother is so unselfish, you know—she always insists on my going—'

'H'm.' There was a world of expression in the short grunt. 'Tell your mother, Emily,' Miss Barclay quickly added, 'that I should be very glad to read to her, or anything else I can do in the evenings. She and I used to be great friends when we were younger.'

'I won't go in with you this evening, girls,' said Emily, turning back.

Emily hurried towards the gate, a surge of remorseful thought rushing upon her. Bad eyes, ill and alone—her mother! She had always believed herself a dutiful daughter, yet how it sounded as brought out by the sharp questioning of Miss Barclay.

She turned at sound of a step behind her and found that Miss Barclay had followed her. All the sharpness, however, had gone out of her voice, and she laid a caressing hand on the young girl's arm.

'My dear, I'm afraid I sounded meddling and impudent just now.'

'Oh no,' murmured Emily.

'It was because I felt strong about it,' her voice broke, but she went on. 'I had a mother when I was your age, Emily, and

she was ill. I had plenty of young friends, and mother always told me to go—she was like yours, unselfish. I left her much alone, and I never realized until long afterwards how sad and forlorn it was for her — how hard and undutiful it was in me. I learned my mistake too late.'

With a kiss she hurried away, leaving Emily with her full heart to hasten to her mother.

'Oh, mother, mother! I am the most selfish, undutiful daughter that ever lived. Can you forgive me?'

'Why — my dearie!' Mother stared in alarm at Emily's excited tone.

'Here have I been leaving you alone night after night. And you have always urged me to go—and — now, mother, you know you have missed me.'

Emily had brought a light, and mother was raising her hand to shield her eyes, but there was other cause for shielding them, and Emily was pricked to the heart.

'You have been sad and lonely. Mother, I'm going to give up everything and stay at home with you. Will that make you happy?'

'Not at all, sweet one.' Mother smiled up at the dear, bright face. 'Why, think of all you do, and of all the people who want you—'

'Do any of them want me more than you do?'

'Well, I think not, dear—'

'And for all I do, can I do anything better than be a comfort to you? We'll divide it a little now. Half my evenings with you, then. Hey, mother, darling?'

'Oh, my daughter! it will be new life to me.'—American Messenger.

Out From the Shop.

(Annette L. Noble, in 'Forward'.)

It was an intensely hot afternoon in August, and very little shopping was going on in Haworth's great bazaar. The fashionable ladies who crowded the place in the cooler months of the year were now at the seaside or in the mountains, and the few customers present were people who had come in from the country or near towns.

At the kid glove counter were two young girls about nineteen years of age—girls decidedly attractive in their appearance. One, a slight, dark-eyed little creature, had the somewhat stylish air of an elegantly dressed young lady; but the showy lace at her neck was cotton, and very coarse, the jet fringe on the threadbare dress was tattered, and, in spite of her prettier face, the observer would perhaps turn with more interest to the frank, countenance of the girl at her side. Customers always found the latter much interested to suit them and very honest in her statements about the goods; but, as we have said, this afternoon there were but few customers.

Kate Haines was leaning languidly against the counter, fanning herself with a newspaper, when observed by the floor-walkers, reading a sensational story when she could do so undetected. Mollie Willis, her next neighbor, was in deep thought, her clear eyes fixed on the open door. No breeze came in, only now and then a puff of heated air.

Kate tossed her paper under the counter at last, and gave a sigh of discontent.

'What is the matter to-day?' asked Mollie. 'The same as yesterday. I hate this. Every bone in my body aches standing doing nothing such a day as this.'

'Yes, I believe I prefer the holidays; when there is such a rush that I forget who I am by day, and am too tired to remember at night,' answered Mollie, listlessly.

'We are young and good-looking; I don't