

## How Jean Belonged to the Band.

BY E. A. D.

"I think you will have to give it up Jean! Your father gives to our own church, and wants you to have what is necessary, but anything extra."—

"But, mother, only two cents a month! I was afraid you could'n't spare me Saturday afternoon."

"Oh I would'n't mind that once a month, I could give you the money too, out of the eggs; but twenty-five cents now and ten cents won't be the end of it, there will be five cents now and ten cents then. If you could'n't do as the other girls do, you would be discontented."

Jean had been helping to clear the table as they talked. At this point she took the towel from the bar behind the stove, and hurrying into the pantry, set herself resolutely at the dishwashing. Presently her speed slackened; to save them from falling on the plate she was wiping, she turned her head aside and brushed away the tears.

The trouble was this; yesterday, Mrs. Ellis, the minister's wife, had the girls to tea and talked to them about organizing a Mission Band. They had taken hold of the idea readily; nearly all said they would join. Jean—she thought she would, she would like to belong. And now mother thought it could'n't be.

However, Jean was not a girl to waste time in crying, she thought instead. When the dishes were put away she was ready to talk to her mother again. "Would you be willing for me to belong if I took my berry money?"

"Why, yes, I suppose so," slowly. "If you're so set on it as all that; but you know, you always want more things now than you can buy with that, and I can't spare you any more time."

"Well, I have to do without things any way. May I take that?"

"Oh yes, you may do as you please with what you earn yourself."

What were looked on as necessities in Jean's home were provided for her; but the frills, gloves, ribbons, etc., even the drawing book and pencils she used at school, which her father called "nonsense," she earned herself by picking berries. It was hot, hard work, picking strawberries in the hill pasture, but she was glad to be released from house and daily work to earn some money for herself.

Why was Jean so anxious to join the Mission Band? ask the curious. Had a deep interest in missions been aroused in that hour's talk with Mrs. Ellis? Interest was awakened certainly. She looked at it more as an opportunity for herself

than as a way to serve others, having no idea of the condition of things in those places where Christ is not known. Mrs. Ellis had showed them piles of blue covered magazines full of pictures. "These we will have, when we study about China, and these have fine pictures of India." Then she had a book written by a minister who had lived among them, that told wonderful stories of the Indians of the Northwest.

It was pleasant to meet the girls and have something in common with them outside of school, Jean was a favorite there, but she was a very busy girl and distance hindered much visiting. Then the up-the-road girls her mother did not approve of as companions; and the girls down the road, well their fathers had rich interval farms that had descended from father to son, and bank accounts as well, while Jean's father had to buy his farm himself. So Jean was left between the upper and lower crust, as it were.

Jean's lessons are learned; she has closed her books, and is leaning on her elbows thinking. Her views have grown wider since the day she decided to belong. She has watched Dr. Hart and his brave little party in their long journey by sea and land. She can tell you a good deal about Japan and British Columbia, but her first reading in the Band—"Who will open the door to Ling Te?" was a revelation to her, and China is nearest her heart. Her mother at the other side of the table, busy with her mending, looks over now and then, wondering what Jean has in her head now. She can sympathize, she remembers her own girlhood and she thinks Jean takes after her.

Jean is the first to speak. "Mother, if I see after the hens all myself, except when I'm in school, could you give me one for my own, to do as I like with the eggs and chickens?"

"Why Jean, you see after the hens now, except when you don't get up early, or you forget them and I don't remind you."

"Oh! yes, but I mean to take the care on myself, be sure to get up and all that, so that you would not have to think of them."

"Well, yes, if you do all that it would be such a saving of my breath and patience I could afford to give you two hens."

"O, mother, could you? Will you?" "Yes. I don't think I can feed two broods of chicken but you can have two hens and one lot of chicks. There must be no forgetting, though, and I will expect my hens to do as well as ever."

"Thank you, I'll do my best." "Now daughter, its time you were in your bed."

"What's Jean planning? asks her older brother who has just come in."

"To get some money," her mother says, "that Mission Band is making her energetic and self-reliant any way. I guess its a good thing she belongs."

Jean goes happily to bed, saying to herself, "Now I can have a mite box, I'm so glad I belong."

[Hampton.]