

HOUSEHOLD.

Be Patient.

(Mary F. Butts, in 'Good Cheer.')

Be patient, dear, and wisely guard
The lips' swift-opening door;
For sooner than you think the need
Of patience may be o'er.

Far better that you learn to bear
The faults that jar and fret,
Than that the lonely days to come
Be poisoned with regret.

How Things 'Began to be Different.'

(Anna Burnham Bryant, in 'Forward.')

"There it's clean now" said Mrs. Damon, standing off to survey the work of her hands, or the last end of it. "The whole house is clean from the top to the bottom, and I only hope it'll stay so."

Mrs. Damon had been married twenty-three years, and this was the twenty-second time she had 'done fall house-cleaning.' The house was built new when she came into it. The Damons were not a moving people. When they dropped into a place or a custom, they stayed in it. The unexpected never happened in that house. Everything (the neighbors said) 'looked like waxwork, and went like clock work.' It was very ungrateful in Virginia Jane to say what she had that morning.

"I do wish, mother," she had snapped out, as she packed her luncheon basket, "oh, don't I wish there was ever anything different at this house!"

"Why, what do you want, child?" cried her mother, looking sharply under the white napkin that covered a good, substantial luncheon, and a sensible one. "Bread, caraway cookies, sliced meat, and an apple turnover. I don't see what more you want."

"Tisn't more. It's different! And I ain't talking about lunches. It's everything. Josie Drinkwater has s'prises in her lunch—things she don't expect for. And they go to things—and have 'em! Oh, dear!"

"Oh, dear!" echoed her mother, indignantly, as the door closed. "I don't see what ails the child. As if I didn't work my fingers to the bone to give 'em all a clean, comfortable home, with good food and good clothes, and plenty of 'em! As if their father didn't provide 'em good schooling and all the comforts of life and everything! As if—"

She suddenly broke off and, in her own phrase, 'pitched into' the day's work. No emotions ever interfered with that. She had a good, big 'stent' to finish before sundown.

When Mr. Damon came home from the potato field to get his dinner, he didn't hear his wife scurrying round, setting the last things on the dinner table. The table wasn't even set, and the only sound was Dick stamping about in his big boots and calling, impatiently, "Mother! mother!" The little boys, like Jinny, had taken their dinner, and Maud Ella was on a visit to her grandmother's. Mother usually bustled about enough to keep the house from feeling desolate, no matter who was absent.

"Marm!—where be ye?" called the farmer, fretfully. A hollow voice answered him from the cellar, and both he and Dick went down there.

"It's my foot," moaned his wife, as he picked her up at the bottom of the steep stairway. "I went and sprained the ankle or somethin'. 'Tain't so much matter as if it wa'n'a clean from top to toe—the house. I mean; but what are all you hungry men folks going to do for d'inner?"

Father tucked her upon the lounge tenderly, and spoke gruffly.

"You 'tend to the foot end and I'll 'tend to the vittle end. Don't see what you had to go and cut up such a caper as that for jest in potato-diggin' time!"

"Nor I, neither," she moaned. "You'll have to send for Maud Ella."

"Send for nobody!" he answered. "She's only one more to work for."

"Then you'll have to get a girl. And, oh, my clean house—" groaned the immaculate housewife, foreseeing horror and havoc.

Neighbors cannot do everything. By the second morning, Mr. Damon was willing to listen to the universal advice and 'get a girl,' for it was very evident that there was no other way to do till such time as Mrs. Damon's foot became well enough to be stepped on. She came on the mail train from Boston, and the kind neighbor who found her came over and undertook to 'set her going.'

"I s'all do lofely!" said the pretty German maiden, after a few minutes careful watching, while a few things had been explained to her. "I so sorry the kind mutter haf trouble. I vill help her so goot. And de leetle vones—ve vill cel-e-brate!"

Anything funnier than the laughing way in which she pronounced this last big word cannot be imagined. Her white teeth showed, and she patted Jinny on the shoulder, and popped a bit of plum cake into Bobby's open mouth as he happened to stand nearest of the staring group of children. "Celebrate—that ees great 'Merican vort! I haf learn so mooch already. My Mees Deexon, she always celebrate."

The sentence ended with her infectious giggle, and the children chimed in for sympathy, Jinny especially. A happy thought thrilled through her. Surely this was 'something different.'

"You'll do, Hilda!" said the neighbor, warmly. "You'll have a good time."

"Yaas, ve vill haf goot time," echoed the girl, joyfully, as the door closed. "Goot times—dat is all of life. Goot times when you vork, and goot times when you play. Ve vill all haf de goot times togedder."

Supper was so good that the children were clamorous for it, but Hilda put them by.

"De mutter first," she said, with smiling reproach. "She haf always waited on eferybody. Now it iss her celebration."

The hot waffles and poached eggs were carried to the low lounge while the supper waited, and Mrs. Damon stared like the children. Never in all her laborious, ministering life had she seen or known anything like it. Why, it was as good as being a queen! How pretty it was! How kind she looked! How good the children were to-night! What she said was:

"Seems good to eat something you ain't ben a-cooking!"

The farmer and his boys came in, and they praised the 'johnny cake' and the spicy gingerbread. Hilda beamed on all, but was less talkative than with the children. They were too hungry to notice. For two whole days they had lived on charity. That was always cold, rather scanty, and usually too sweet to be 'healthy.'

"To-morrow I'm six years old," said Bobby, getting the hard knots out of his shoe at bedtime. "No, you needn't help me. Big boys don't be helped. And any old rag man can have those things!" pointing disdainfully to his outer garments, which lay in a heap on the floor where he had thrown them. "I shan't have to wear girl dresses any more. Mother said so."

"Yes, you will, too, have to wear them," said Jinny, shortly, throwing his gray flannel nightdress over him. "Mother didn't finish making the buttonholes, and I don't know how, and her foot aches too much to-night to touch a one of 'em."

"Oh, but I do know how to make the lofeliest buttonholes!" cried Hilda from the next room, where she was helping Maud Ella with her nightly hair-braiding. "If you vill not scream so laut—"

"Mother will not let you. I don't believe," said Jinny, and Hilda went to ask her.

"Why, you poor child, I don't want you to work night and day and between times!" said the worried mother, gratefully. "Where did you learn to make buttonholes? He can wait one day, I guess, and not hurt him."

"Oh, but to celebrate!" said Hilda, anxiously. "It iss that he iss old to-morrow! Mees Deexon, she say it iss great shame not to celebrate on eferybody's birthday!"

"Well, if you can. I suppose he'd be

happy as a king if you did. I promised him."

So Hilda sat up and made buttonholes, and next morning they were all clumsily fastened by the happiest six-year-old boy in seven counties. Downstairs Hilda was busy getting breakfast for Mr. Damon and Dick and Dan, and all the rest of them, but she wasn't too busy to think of Bobby and get ready for him. How funny his place looked when he came tumbling down to breakfast! There was a file of doughnut men marching past his plate, and Mr. Damon laughed half a dozen good natured laughs when he saw the stack of brown-paper bundles on top of it, for the children had been stirred up by Hilda's thoughtfulness, and each had brought a token of affection for her to 'fix' for them. Jinny's contribution was a very realistic snapping turtle, which, being newly wound up, suddenly burst its paper-and-string environment and began walking or crawling all over the table. This, of course, led to shrieks of laughter from the children, and Bobby's birthday was a success from the very first letter.

"Oh, I wish we could have a birthday every day!" sighed Jinny, as they were going to bed. "And Hilda to be in it. She's the laughingest kind of a girl! But you wasn't born but once a year—nobody is, 'less they're twins, o' course; but it's an awful long time to wait for another one. I wish they was more birthdays to have good times in."

"Vy, you haf a lot!" cried Hilda, over hearing. "Seex shildren, and de fader and mutter—"

"And you, Hilda! You must say you!"

"And the vashervowan that come to help make all clean. Shee poor voman with many, many shildren!" said Hilda, twinkling all her ten fingers illustratively. "Efery von haf a birthday! Eferybody haf von!"

Hilda said this impressively, as if it must be a new thought to the children. In a sense it was. Not one of them had ever happened to think before that poor, slatternly Mrs. McMullins had any children, much less that they had birthdays to be remembered. In a day's time Hilda had found out all about it. It set them thinking enthusiastically.

"There is the boy that brings in the paper!" said Virginia Jane, thoughtfully. "Wouldn't it be fun to find out and hand him something—done up, you know, in a lot of funny brown paper and strings, any quantity of 'em?"

Hilda nodded understandingly, and the children vied with each other in thinking up other people who had birthdays.

"And besides of that, the neighbors!" she said at last, when they stopped for breath and looked at her suggestively. "Mees Deexon, she say all people like be think about, and mos' efery house haf some seek von to make ox-cuse, or else dere be accident, maybe—somebody get hurt hisself. Always some goot reason to be a little kind. De bresent iss noting, you understand; it iss the goot vill that makes happy."

"Hilda!" came a faint call from the front room, where Mrs. Damon was resting after the doctor's visit.

Hilda sprang up from the floor, where she had been untying hard knots while she talked with the children. Her round face wore a most comical look of contrition.

"We haf tire out de poor, sick mutter!" she murmured, disappearing down the dark stairway.

"What are you doing, Hilda?" asked Mrs. Damon, wistfully.

"Talking!" confessed Hilda, honestly and bravely. "I forget. I should be shame."

"Why should you ashamed? I heard all you said. I want to ask you—"

"Oh, no, you ned not to ask!" protested Hilda. "I s'all be more careful. I will nefer, nefer wake you up with more foolish talking."

"Perhaps I need to be waked up!" murmured Mrs. Damon, half to herself. Then aloud, "I want to ask you who this Mrs. Dixon is you talk about so much."

"She my meenister's wife—where I leev before I come here."

"She was a very good woman. I suppose."