

DOT.

A Story of the Fresh Air Fund.

"It's a hard idea," said Miss Reliance Roxbury, as she stood among the current bushes at the garden fence. "A most ridiculous idea! I wonder what this gushing American people will do next?" And she gave an emphatic twitch to her purple calico sun-bonnet. There was a faint murmur of dissent from a little woman on the other side of the moss green fence. "No—of course you can't agree with me," continued Miss Reliance, as the clusters of ruby and pearl flew into the six quart pail at her feet. "You're so soft-hearted that your feelings are forever running off with your common sense. You never say a word about the national debt, or the condition of our navy but let anybody start a subscription for sending blanket shawls to Brazil or putting up a monument to Methuselah on the meeting house green, you'll give your last quarter. And now, your going to open your house to a lot of little ragamuffins from New York!" The motherly brown eyes on the other side of the fence were full of tears, and a pleasant voice replied: "It makes my heart ache to think how the poor things suffer crowded together in dirty streets, with never a breath of cover field or a glass of milk. If you'd just read about it, Reliance, you'd count it a blessed privilege to give them a bit of our sunshine." "I'd as soon have a tribe of Zulus on the place," said Miss Reliance, "and if you'll take my advice you'll save yourself lots of trouble." Mrs. Lane stopped her work for a moment and said: "Likim and me are all alone now, Reliance. One by one we've laid Kate and Sarah and baby Lizzie over there in the old burying ground; and Jack is in Colorado, and Richard in Boston, and we get hungry some times for the sound of little feet. When I began to read about the Fresh Air Fund it kind of sent a thrill all over me, and Likim he reads about it every day, before he wipes looks at the Egyptian war, and he evers his glasses pretty often too. Then when we heard the parson say that a party would come here if places could be found for 'em Likim spoke right off for four, and they'll be here next Tuesday, and I'm going to make it just as much like heaven as I can." "You'll make yourself sick, that's what you'll do, Amanda Lane," replied Miss Reliance, "but if you want your garden overrun and your silver spoons stolen, and your house full of flies, and your nerves prostrated, why its your own fault. I must go in and get my jelly started." Miss Roxbury went up the path between the sun-flowers and hollyhocks, entered the large, sunny, airy kitchen and set down the currants for Hannah, the house maid, to pick over. Then she hung the purple calico sun-bonnet on the nail that for forty years had been dedicated to the same purpose, and went into the cool sitting room to rest in her favorite chintz covered rocker. Miss Reliance Roxbury had been for twenty years, with the exception of a gardener and housemaid, the sole occupant of this stone dwelling that had stood for more than a century beneath its elms and maples the pride of the village of Lynford. She was a stern woman who liked but few people, and had a horror of children, dogs and sentiment. The village boys, with a keen perception of her unsympathetic nature, called her "Old Ironsides." She was proud of her birth, and the substantial property that had fallen to her at the death of her father, Old Judge Roxbury. She was a member of the Presbyterian church, and paid high rental for the Roxbury pew, but with that considered that her pecuniary obligations to the cause were at an end. As a general thing she had not allowed convictions on the subject of giving to trouble her, but somehow, even since Sunday, when the pastor stated the work of the Fresh Air Fund, and made a fervent appeal for "these little ones that suffer," she had been subjected to numerous vague but uncomfortable sensations. She rocked back and forth in the spacious sitting room that no fly dared to invade, and noted the perfect order of the apartment. From the china shepherdess on the mantel to the braided rugs at the doors, everything occupied the same position as in the days of Miss Roxbury's girlhood. There was torture in the thought of having the table cover pulled away, or seeing the shells and prim old daguerreotypes disarranged on the whetstones; of having sand tracked in by small feet over the faded Brussels carpet, and her pet verbena bed invaded by eager young fingers. Surely religion and humanity could not demand such sacrifices of her. "Please, ma'am, the currants is to be put over," said Hannah, at the door. Miss Roxbury rose at once, glad of another channel for her thoughts, but amid her weighing and measuring, and her careful calculations of pints and pounds, the strange impression did not

leave her mind. After the rich crimson syrup had been poured into the row of shining tumblers on the table, she returned to her chintz-covered rocker and took up the Bible to read her daily chapter. Opening it at random, her eyes fell upon these words: "Then shall He answer them saying, 'Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these ye did it not unto Me.'" Miss Roxbury read no further on that page, but hurriedly turned back to Chronicles, which she felt with perfectly safe ground. But mingled with the long genealogical tables she saw other words between the lines, so that the Israelitish records read thus: "The son of Eliknah, the son Joel, the son of Azariah. ('Ye did it not.')" "The son of Tanath the son of Assir, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah. ('Ye did it not.')" Finally the whole page seemed to resolve itself into these four monosyllables. She closed the Bible and put it in its accustomed place on the table, bounded on the north by a lamp, on the south by the matchbox, on the east by Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, and on the west by a bunch of worsted roses, under a glass case. She was restless, miserable, tormented. She endeavored to read the Life of Napoleon Bonaparte, but even the thrilling story of the Russian campaign was lacking in interest, compared with her own inward conflict between duty and the cold selfishness of a lifetime. She did not enjoy her dinner, although the butter-beans were from her garden, and the black raspberries were the first of the season. She could not take her accustomed afternoon nap. A wonderful new design in patchwork known as the Rocky Mountain pattern could not fasten her attention. She ordered the horse and ruckaway and drove four miles after wild cherry bark, for which she had no need as her garret was already a great herbarium. At last the dreary day came to its close, but was succeeded by an equally uncomfortable night. Amid frequent tossing and waking, Miss Roxbury dreamed of this little hands stretched out to her in piteous appeal, and a sad wonderful voice that said with infinite reproach: "Ye did it not." The Rev. Joseph Alder was surprised soon after breakfast the next morning by the appearance of Miss Reliance Roxbury at the parsonage porch. She brought a basket of raspberries, and said: "I won't come in this time, thank you. I just want to say I'll take one—of those children." II. "Mamma, is it mornin'?" "No, Dot; go to sleep." The child turned restlessly on the miserable straw pallet in the corner of the small hot room. It was after midnight, and in summer, but there was a fire in the stove, for the woman at the pine table was ironing by the light of a glimmering tallow candle. There was no breeze, but in at the open window came stifling, poisonous odors. Pale and faint, the mother bent over her work, and smoothed the dark calico dress as carefully as if it were the finest muslin and lace. She had worked from early dawn until dark at her daily task—button holes at four cents a dozen. A cup of tea and a crust of bread had been her sustenance. For Dot there was a bun and an orange. The dress was finished and hung on the only chair in the room, with several other small articles. A hat of coarse white straw, with a blue ribbon twisted around it, a pair of bright stockings, a tiny handkerchief with a bit of color in the border. All were pitifully cheap in texture, but dear in patient toil and loving sacrifice. Dot was going to the country for two long, blissful weeks, and the mother could cover the expense of the meagre outfit by some extra deprivation during the child's absence. She turned toward the pallet. Dot's violet eyes had opened. Her golden curls were tangled by the tossing of her little head on the pillow. Her thin, pinched features were flushed with feverish excitement. "Mamma, is it mornin'?" "No, darling." The woman blew out the light; three tiny fingers crept eagerly into her palm. "Mamma, tell me more about it," pleaded Dot. "Darling, it is years and years since mamma saw the country, but it was just as I've told you. Wide, clean streets, with big trees and blue sky and flowers." "Oh, oh," murmured Dot. "Does you suppose they'll give me one Fower, mamma? I found on the street once—a little white Fower. A lady dropped it." "Yes, dear, you'll have all the flowers you'll want. Don't talk any more to-night." The sky was already white with the dawn. The mother did not sleep. As the light of another day of misery crept into the room, she raised herself on one elbow and looked long at her child, retaining an impulse to snatch it to her

heart, then softly rose, and after bathing her face and hands and kneeling in prayer for endurance, took her work and sat down by the narrow window. A few hours later she stood amid the bustle of the Grand Central depot with Dot clinging to her dress. A crowd of wandering, expectant children were being marshalled into line to take their places on the eastward-bound train. "Come," said the kind gentleman in charge, to Dot. Dot kissed her mother "good-by," and laughed even while the tears ran down her face, as she entered the ranks of the odd procession. "Oh, sir!" said the mother, as she turned away. "Take care of my baby. I've nothing else in the world." III. There was an unusual stir in the village of Lynford. The railway station was thronged with people, and surrounded with vehicles awaiting the afternoon train. The Rev. Joseph Alder and the ministers of sister churches conversed together on the platform. "A glorious charity!" said the Baptist minister, raising his hat to wipe the perspiration from his brow. "I expect that these poor children will be a great blessing to our people," said the Methodist minister, "in broadening the sympathies and warming the hearts of some who have been oblivious to all interests save their own." "Yes," replied the Rev. Mr. Alder. "I have a practical illustration of that, not a stone's throw from where we are standing." The "practical illustration" consisted of the Roxbury ruckaway drawn up amid the other conveyances, with Miss Reliance on the back seat, in a state of mind in which newly-fledged philanthropy struggled with a terror of ragamuffins. She had to come to the conclusion that her visit to the parsonage had been made during an attack of mental aberration; but the word of a Roxbury was as immovable as the historic granite on which Zephaniah Roxbury stepped from the "Mayflower" in 1620, and the last representative of the race would not falter now, although seized with dire apprehension whenever her eyes rested on the verberna bed. It was with a grim determination to brave the worst, that she awaited the train that afternoon, but when the locomotive appeared on the bridge below the village, the thought of the dreadful boy who was coming to invade her peaceful domain nearly overcame her, and her impulse was to order the hired man to drive home as quickly as possible. She could appreciate the emotions of a Roman dame at the approach of the Vandal. As the train stopped at the station the people crowded forward to welcome their guests. Miss Roxbury peered anxiously from the ruckaway. It was not a very appalling sight. A group of pale little children, tired, dusty and bewildered. Many eyes overflowed as the train moved on, and left these wistful faces, pinched by want and misfortune, in the midst of the kindly villagers. "Here, Miss Roxbury, here is a wee lamb for you," said Mr. Alder. Miss Roxbury had not observed his approach in the crowd, and gave a start of surprise as he stood before her. As she looked there was a curious sensation under the left side of her crape shawl, and her cold gray eyes grew misty. The "dreadful boy" had changed into a tiny girl of six years, as frail as a snow-drop, whose coarse attire could not mar the loveliness of her dark violet eyes and hair of tangled sunbeams. The little creature stretched out her arms to Miss Roxbury, who reached forward and took her into the ruckaway, the ancient springs of which creaked with astonishment. "What is your name?" said Miss Roxbury, feeling strangely awkward as they drove along. "Dot," said the child. "You hasn't kissed me yet, has you?" Miss Roxbury bent and kissed the child. The ruckaway creaked louder than before. The touch of the child's mouth thrilled the iron nerves of the woman with a sensation inexpressibly delightful. Miss Roxbury had imagined her life to be a happy one. She now discovered that she had mistaken selfish isolation for happiness. She was beginning to be happy the first time in fifty years. Dot was too tired to be very talkative, but she leaned against Miss Roxbury with a look of quiet wonder and content in her eyes. "Is I goin' to stay here?" she asked as the ruckaway stopped at the Roxbury gate and she surveyed the old stone house with woodbine clambering over its gray walls. "Yes, child." Dot's face grew luminous. A bath, a bountiful supply of bread and milk and a walk in the garden kept her joyful till twilight, but with bedtime came the longing for the mother. "I want my mamma—my own mamma," she said. Then Miss Roxbury gave full vent to the instinct that can never be utterly destroyed in a woman. Taking the child

on her lap she caressed the white face and sunny curls in a restful, soothing way, and talked so cheerfully that the shadows fell from the violet eyes, and Dot, nestling close, said, "I love you." Miss Roxbury not only began to be happy; she had begun to live. With the coming of this sweet child heaven was changing the dull grove her existence into celestial rhythm. Her cold, levelless nature in the presence of this tiny girl was already becoming Christ-like in its tender misery. Dot offered her evening prayer and was put in Miss Roxbury's own stately bed. "Good night, dear," said Miss Roxbury with a kiss. "Good night," said Dot, burying her face in the great bunch of white roses she had brought to bed with her. "I feel zil I'd died and gone to heaven." Miss Roxbury passed a wakeful night, but not a restless one. Her mind was filled with plans, and then it was such a pleasure to lie and listen to the soft breathing at her side, and occasionally to touch her little hand on the counterpane, still holding the treasured rose. The next day Dot ran nearly wild with delight. She revelled among the daisies in the deep, soft grass, and it was pitiful to see how small an object could charm her hungry mind. God's commonest gifts were unknown to her in bounty and purity. Sunshine, sweet air, flowers and bird songs were enough to make her happy, when she found the brook that danced across the meadow her delight was unbounded. After a day or two Miss Roxbury took the morning train down to Badleyville to do some shopping. She was gone until night, and all the way home she thought of the glad voice that would welcome her, and her face grew so radiant with the new joy in her soul that when she sighted with parcels at Lynford station, old Deacon Bennet failed to recognize her until she had passed him. "Wall, I declare," he said, "Reliance looks as if she had discovered a gold mine." Miss Roxbury reached home and soon had the "gold mine" in her arms. After tea the parcels had to be opened. There were paper patterns, rolls of muslin, embroidery and blue flannel, a pair of child's slippers, dainty hose, bright ribbons and a large doll. "Oh, oh, oh!" was all that Dot could say, but her tone expressed more than the most extensive volume of philanthropy that was ever written. The village dressmaker was installed in the house for a week. The Rocky Mountain patchwork was consigned to the seclusion of the spare room closet, and Miss Roxbury developed a taste in Mother Hubbard's dresses and ruffled aprons that was truly marvellous. In the meantime she wrote a letter to Dot's mother, in which Dot added the picture of the cat, which although not absolutely true of nature, resembling in fact the plan for a house, was a great satisfaction to the young artist. There came no reply to this letter. Dot's cheeks were getting rosy and her step buoyant. "If it wasn't for mamma," she said, "I wouldn't want to go back forever 'n' ever." When Mr. Knox, the gentleman in charge of the party, called to see that Dot would be ready to return at the appointed time, Miss Roxbury exclaimed almost fiercely: "I can't let her go. I need her. Why may I not keep her?" "I do not believe her mother would part with her," said Mr. Knox. Miss Roxbury was silent for a few moments, but looked out on the lawn where Dot was swinging in a hammock with the doll and cat. "It will be a dull house without the child," she said; "but I will bring her to the station." IV. When the morning of Dot's departure came, Miss Roxbury arrayed herself in her second-best black silk, put a few articles in a satchel, filled a small basket with fresh eggs, new biscuit, a pot of butter and a bottle of currant wine, and said to Hannah:—"I may be gone two or three days. Have the east chamber thoroughly aired and dusted before I get back, tell Hiram to take a peck of peas down to Mrs. Alder. Don't forget to see if those canned strawberries have worked or not, and be sure the front door is kept bolted and put the last brood of chickens in the other coop, and keep a newspaper over the geranium slips in the afternoon." "Yes, ma'am." "And, Hannah, be very careful to keep out the flies, and tell Hiram to fit the well-curb. He is so apt to forget things." Dot was bathed in tears as she mounted to her place in the ruckaway. "I can't come back?" she said. "I hope so, dear," replied Miss Roxbury, who appeared preoccupied and anxious and scarcely heard Dot's chatter on the way to the station. "Why, Miss Roxbury," said Mr. Alder as he assisted her to the platform, "you are a veritable fairy god mother. This rosy, dainty maiden cannot be the same bit of humanity that I held in my

arms a fortnight ago. You will miss her shall you not?" "I shall go with her to New York anyway," said Miss Roxbury, "and I don't mean to come back alone, either. Mr. Alder, I hope God will forgive me for the empty house I've had all these years." "An empty house means a lonely heart," he replied. "And I am glad you are going with the child." That afternoon Miss Roxbury and Dot, attended by Mr. Knox, wended their way through a dark alley in one of the most squalid districts of New York City, and climbed flight after flight of rickety stairs in a rear tenement. The heart, the fifth, the scenes of misery were indescribable. Miss Roxbury felt as if she was on the confines of the bottomless pit. Dot darted down a long passage and disappeared in a room beyond. The friends followed and beheld her clasped tightly in the arms of a wan figure that lay on a pallet. The woman had fainted. "Mamma, mamma, look at me!" pleaded Dot, and began to cry. There was no water in the room, and Mr. Knox took a cracked pitcher from the shelf and went with Dot in search of some. Miss Roxbury knelt beside the woman, who was only about thirty years of age, and had been very attractive as a young girl. There was a gleam of gold on her left hand. Her hair was sunny like Dot's, and her features delicately shaped. This letter that Miss Roxbury had written lay crumpled and tear-stained on the pillow. While Miss Roxbury gazed the woman opened her eyes. They were beautiful eyes, but sad with want and a struggle against despair. She tried to sit up and moaned. "My baby—please give me my baby!" Just then Dot returned and carried the pitcher of water to her mother, who drank long and eagerly, then holding out her arms to Dot, said feebly to Miss Roxbury: "O, madam, will you take care of my little girl? I think I'm going to die." "You are not going to die—not a bit of it," said Miss Roxbury, pouring out some wine into a tescup, "but I'll take care of you both. There, drink this, and you'll feel better right away. How long since you've had anything to eat?" "Day before yesterday," was the faint reply, "I had to stop work four days ago." "Now, Mr. Knox," said Miss Roxbury, slipping her purse into his hand, "just step out to the nearest grocery and order some kindling wood and tea and sugar. I'll poach a nice fresh egg for this poor soul, and we'll see about getting her out of this place." The woman's face brightened, but she said, "I'm giving you much trouble." "Trouble!" said Miss Roxbury, "I'm all alone in the world, and I've a house with twenty four rooms in it, and plenty to do with, and what I've been thinking of all these years I can't say. I've been a crusty, cold, disagreeable old fossil, Mrs. Winthrop, and when I come down here and find folk starving to death, and crowded like cattle. I wonder the good Lord has had any mercy on me. Don't you worry another mite. Here's the first stuff already." Miss Roxbury rolled up her sleeves, put an apron over her silk skirt, and while Mr. Knox built a fire and brought water to heat, she bathed Mrs. Winthrop's face and hands and brushed out her hair. "Thank God! Why I'm better already," said Mrs. Winthrop, with a rare smile. "Of course you are, child," said Miss Roxbury. "We'll see what good food and Mountain air will do for you yet." A few days later found an occupant in the great east chamber of the Roxbury house. Mrs. Winthrop sat in an easy chair before the open window inhaling the blossoming honeysuckle that nodded to her through the casement. The morning sunlight fell across her bright hair and peaceful face. Dot hung over her shoulder and threw daisies in her lap. Down by the garden fence stood Miss Roxbury talking with her neighbor, Mrs. Lane. Mrs. Winthrop smiled from her window, and there came an answering smile from the of the purple calico sun-bonnet. "So you're really goin' to keep 'em," said Mrs. Lane. "Yes, I've adopted both of 'em," replied Miss Roxbury, with a Deum in her voice, "and I have sent for half a dozen little girls to stay until cold weather." "Well, it does beat all," said Mrs. Lane, wiping her eyes on the corner of her checkeredingham apron. "I s'pose I needn't ask you now, Reliance, what you think of the Fresh Air Fund?" "What do you think of it?" said Miss Roxbury gravely. "I believe it's been the means of saving my soul. I should have gone into the next world holding my head pretty high, and considering myself better than most folk, and the Judge would have said, 'Reliance Roxbury, I gave you a large house and a

long bank account. What have you done with them?' Then how many empty rooms and Grandfather Roxbury's gold pieces would have stood up against me! And he would have said, 'Ye did it not unto me. Depart from me,' and what answer could I have made him? 'It is very true,' she continued, as Dot came fitting down the pathway like a fairy, 'of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.'" THE END. Never Tired It. What? Never tried Johnston's Tonic Bitters? Then do so at once, it's positively the best general tonic on the market. I've often heard of it but thought that it was to be placed on the list of the many trashy preparations that flood our market, but since you recommend it, so highly I'll give it a trial. Do a little good for a complaint in which a little is of benefit, and can be taken by man, woman, or child. 50c. and \$1 per bottle at Goehle's Drug Store, Alton Block, Goderich, sole agent. Honor your engagement. If you promise to meet a man or to do a certain thing at a certain moment, be ready at the appointed time. Sore Eyes The eyes are always in sympathy with the body, and afford an excellent index of its condition. When the eyes become weak, and the lids inflamed and sore, it is an evidence that the system has become disordered by Scrofula, for which Ayer's Sarsaparilla is the best known remedy. Scrofula, which produced a painful inflammation in my eyes, caused me much suffering for a number of years. By the advice of a physician I commenced taking Ayer's Sarsaparilla. After using this medicine a short time I was completely cured. My eyes are now in a splendid condition, and I am as well and strong as ever.—Mrs. William Gage, Concord, N. H. For a number of years I was troubled with a humor in my eyes, and was unable to obtain any relief until I commenced using Ayer's Sarsaparilla. This medicine has effected a complete cure, and I believe it to be the best of blood purifiers.—C. E. Upton, Nashua, N. H. I suffered for a year with inflammation in my left eye. Three ulcers formed on the ball, depriving me of sight, and causing great pain. After trying many other remedies, to no purpose, I was finally induced to use Ayer's Sarsaparilla, and By Taking three bottles of this medicine, have been entirely cured. My sight has been restored, and there is no sign of inflammation, sore, or ulcer in my eye.—Kendall T. Bowen, Sugar Tree Ridge, Ohio. My daughter, ten years old, was afflicted with Scrofulous Sore Eyes. During the last two years she never saw light of any kind. Physicians of the highest standing exerted their skill, but with no permanent success. On the recommendation of a friend I purchased a bottle of Ayer's Sarsaparilla, which my daughter commenced taking. Before she had used the third bottle her sight was restored, and she can now look steadily at a brilliant light without pain. Her cure is complete.—W. E. Sutherland, Evangelist, Shelby City, Ky. Ayer's Sarsaparilla, Prepared by Dr. J. C. Ayer & Co., Lowell, Mass. Sold by all Druggists. Price \$1; six bottles, \$5. A Free Gift. Around each bottle of Dr. Chase's Liver Cure is a medical guide and receipts book containing useful information, over 200 receipts, and pronounced by doctors and druggists as worth ten times the cost of the medicine. Medicine and book \$1. Sold by all druggists. Be on Your Guard. Don't allow a cold in the head to slowly and surely run into Consumption, over you can be cured for 25c. by using Dr. Chase's Catarrh Cure. A few applications cure incipient catarrh; 1 to 2 boxes cure ordinary catarrh; 2 to 5 boxes is guaranteed to cure chronic catarrh. Try it. Only 25c. and sure cure. Sold by all druggists. The People's Livery JOHN KNOX, Proprietor. The subscriber is prepared to furnish the public with The Finest Rigs AT REASONABLE PRICES CALL AND SEE US—Opposite the Colburn Hotel Goderich, Feb. 11th 1887.

AN... Wallace... I eat... I have always plenty of... I am very rule any appetite, an easily temp especially f dishes, but forms. F and beef, bread, of can get that so long food it does what kind i very parti three times or hearty u about it i table of t dinner at 6 of the day spare at d till I have "I find, meat and vegetables, kind of an of vegetal pretty mu are good. That kind a... "Yes, I oat meal; to eat to breakfast; am fond o careful to food, but And it is any time; very little of always I first get I don't ex know th guess it is accountin "Tea don't drink considera never us sugar and I don't b mean al stimulant stronger, times jus I need it liquor. Lager is "In t difference only try especially physic training. "I ha rches by of Wild t bottles i from th Clearwat "A Beant In an reporter said: dentist and c the plac between t Often t until th of the t should Childre should their pl set. I The fir rally t first se ten ne; think t These most o their e or 15c this ti and th manet attent ry. I tooth neglig dentis by th This: the p for a appr "R word Asth all at feet l ness, comy guar mon Lun bott