

comfortable. It was not a guilty conscience that troubled her, however. She fancied all through the service, but entirely without reason, that the well-dressed Cunninghams were looking with disdain upon the humble Bunn.

From the day Gladys entered the high school Eleanor had been her chosen companion. Gladys was real and simple, unaffected and lovable girl, and a true gentlewoman. She was attracted by Eleanor's pleasant face and her bright manner, and gave no thought to the plain exterior of the rest of the Bunn. But Eleanor did not realize this.

The time was approaching for the annual election of officers for the basket-ball team. Eleanor had strong hopes that she might be elected captain; but the contest was certain to be close, for Mabel Gilbert would be the rival candidate, and Mabel's following was large.

Still, Eleanor was sure of the freshmen in a body, and there was Gladys. Gladys was a senior; but she would certainly vote for her chosen friend; and if Gladys did, so would Bessie Smith, who followed Gladys.

One evening Mrs. Bunn appeared in the doorway when Eleanor and her new friend were seated on the steps, and invited Gladys to stay to tea.

Gladys accepted promptly; but Eleanor thought of her besprigged grandmother and stiffened with horror. "What should she do?"

"Who," asked Gladys, laying aside her hat in Eleanor's room, "is the lady we passed in the hall?"

"She's a very distant relative," replied Eleanor, reddening. "She's a distant connection of my mother's by marriage."

Eleanor hoped to have an opportunity to warn Stephen; but that youth came in late, looked a little as possible like Harold Cunningham, and repeatedly called his mother's distant connection by marriage "grandma." Mr. Bunn, too, inconsiderately addressed the stout old lady as "mother."

It is quite probable that Gladys would never have noticed the defects in the table manners of the Bunn family that evening if Eleanor had not attempted them and there to mend them. As it was, the visitor discovered, with Eleanor's help, that Stephen was holding his fork badly, that Mrs. Bunn had left her spoon in her cup when she should have laid it down, that Mr. Bunn had buttered his bread before breaking it, and that Grandmother poured her tea into her saucer.

She discovered something else, too, that was much worse than any of these things.

Eleanor noticed a day or two afterward that Gladys no longer waited for her when school was dismissed, and that she no longer sat upon the Bunn door-step. She had apparently deserted Eleanor for Bessie Smith. This was bad enough, but there was worse to come. The long-expected day of the basket-ball election had arrived, and Gladys voted for the rival candidate. So, of course, did imitative Bessie. Eleanor was defeated by one vote.

"It's my horrid family," said the defeated candidate, throwing herself down on the deserted door-step. "I've done my best with them, too, but I can't improve them a particle. Why couldn't I have had at least one pink satin grandmother, like Gladys Cunningham's?"

From four until six almost every day, during the fall and winter months, the high school girls played

basket-ball in an abandoned roller-skating rink. They were in the habit of exchanging their long skirts for shorter ones, in a corner screened off for the purpose.

One day, when Eleanor was about to emerge from this recess, she heard her own name mentioned. Without thinking what she was doing she instinctively leaned closer to the curtain and listened. Gladys Cunningham and Bessie Smith stood just outside.

"Why didn't you vote for Eleanor?" Bessie was saying. "It wasn't because you liked Mabel Gilbert."

"No, but I thought Mabel would make a better captain."

"Why?"

"She has more tact. Eleanor hasn't any. If she handled the team as she does her family, we wouldn't have any team left by spring. She has the jolliest father, the sweetest mother, the pleasantest brother, and such a nice, comfortable old grandmother, yet she is perfectly horrid to every one of them. She is actually ashamed of them. She criticizes them all the time, and apologizes for their manners and their clothes and their grammar."

"I liked her so much at first," Gladys went on. "But the rest of them just sacrifice themselves for her, and she doesn't appreciate it. Oh, I am so disappointed in her!"

The improver of the Bunn family could not believe her ears. A flood of indignant tears rushed to her eyes, and it was many minutes before she was sufficiently composed to venture from behind the sheltering curtain. She played a sorry game that afternoon, and was the first to leave the rink when the game was finished.

She hurried home to take a look at the Bunn family through the eyes of Gladys Cunningham. Sure enough, her father was jolly, her mother was sweet and sensible besides, Stephen was pleasant, and her grandmother looked much nicer and far more comfortable in her sprigged calico than she could possibly have appeared in pink satin. Neither the clothes nor the manners of the Bunn seemed particularly out of the way that evening.

For the first time in weeks the other Bunn's ate and conversed as they pleased unhampered by criticism from Eleanor. They spent a happy hour at the table, although they were far from suspecting the reason.

Eleanor decided before the meal was over that Gladys was right. From that day forward she worked and worried as zealously over her own shortcomings as she had done over those of her long-suffering family, and with far better results.

One day, some weeks later, Gladys slipped into Eleanor's seat at recess-time, and showed her some new girlish treasure. Eleanor was frigidly polite. The following day Gladys waited at the door and walked home



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with Eleanor, whose manner was not encouraging.

But Gladys persisted. Another day found the reunited friends side by side on the Bunn door-step. Eleanor, resentful at first, had gradually relented under Gladys' persistent blandishments.

"I believe you're a lot nicer than you used to be," said Gladys, with an apologetic hug.

"I believe I am, too," said Eleanor, "thanks to you."

"Me?" questioned Gladys.

"Yes, I'm going to confess, or I don't see how we're going to be friends. I heard what you said to Bessie Smith about me one day at the rink. I caught my name and I—I listened. O dear,"—Eleanor's head went down in her lap,—"I'm going to cry!"

"Oh, don't!" cried Gladys, throwing both arms about her friend. "For the improving had come out all right, after all."

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