

it himself with such a large hole in the toe of his boot.' Joe treated misfortunes as a joke, but Faith's heart had sunk as she had noted the shabby footwear of her little family and remembered how very light the family purse was becoming. So you see it was no wonder at all that the little washwoman was heavy-hearted, for who of us can bear to see our loved ones suffer for want of the necessities of life?

'I must earn some money,' she was thinking, 'but how? I can't leave father, and there doesn't seem to be anything I can do at home.'

'Cheer up! cheer up!' called a robin from the big elm, and then sped away through the blue sky, too busy or too glad to wait to see whether his advice was taken.

Father looked up and the sun took advantage of the opportunity to beam out from behind a passing cloud. Involuntarily Faith's face brightened. The March wind hastened to dry her cheeks and ruffled her hair in the bargain, but after all, this rough treatment proved a good tonic, for Faith laughed as she caught up bag and basket and carolling gayly back to the robin, ran toward the house.

'What is it, father?' she asked, brightly, as she came into the living-room.

The sick man turned wearily from the window.

'I thought a sup of that broth might hearten me up a bit,' he said. 'If I don't get back my strength soon I don't know what is to become of us.'

'You just mustn't get to worrying, father,' said Faith, who had put a very 'cheerful courage on.' 'Things are sure to come out right in the end.'

'There can't be much money left now, and there's the doctor's bill and the medicines to pay for,' the feeble voice grew faint with each anxious thought.

'There, there, father,' said Faith, soothingly. 'Don't think about it now; just try this broth. How good it smells!'

'It is very good, lass, but are you sure you are as saving as you can be, Faith?'

'Oh, father, it was just a few cents for the beef, the cheapest kind, and the vegetables all from our own garden.'

'There, there, I might a' known you'd be prudent, lass, but I can't help worryin', for if I can't get well I might better ha' gone than stay to be a burden to ye.'

'Oh, father, don't say that!' cried Faith, throwing her arms about his neck and pressing a wet cheek against the grizzled face. 'How could we bear it to have you and mother both gone, and how could I have brought up the children alone? We will all be glad to work. Sandy is a great, strong boy, and he is so anxious to find a job of some sort, and now that spring is here we won't need fires much longer and can live more cheaply,' forgetting as readily as do the robins that after a bright March day may come an April snow.

'Now, father shouldn't a' spoken so, dear. It's been a hard pull, but you've been a brave lass, and—why here are the children, hungry as bears, I'll warrant.'

In they tumbled, sniffing the air ravenously. The house seemed suddenly full of boys, or were they whirligigs?

'There's a job at Hawkins. I'm going right up there,' cried Sandy, as he dragged a chair with noisy haste to the table and began at once munching a piece of bread, it being the only eatable in sight.

'Oh, I'm so glad Sandy, I do hope you'll get it,' cried Faith. 'Here's some soup, and, oh, Sandy do hurry.'

'Sure' said the obliging Sandy, although the invitation to greater haste seemed quite un-

necessary, as he was already well under way with his second slice of bread.

At that moment Margie came in bringing a delicate, richly-dressed child, who watched half-awed the rough, frolicsome ways of the boys.

'How do you do, Gracie, won't you have some dinner with us,' asked Faith, hospitably.

'No, thank you, I have had my lunch at school, but I wasn't hungry,' explained Gracie, who was a source of infinite anxiety to her mother, two grandmas and a half dozen aunts because of this same lamentable lack of appetite.

Nevertheless this petted nursling now stood gazing wistfully, nay longingly at the poorly-spread table. Something smelled very, very good, and what a delightful time they were having. To be sure it was very ill-bred of Sandy to blow his soup, but how long would you expect a famished lad to wait for it to cool and perhaps lose a job besides. And could anything be more charming than to float biscuit-boats and make caves in your baked potatoes, as Tom and little Jofie were doing. The longer Gracie watched them the hungrier she became.

'This soup tastes like more,' cried Joe, facetiously, as he ran to the kettle to help himself.

'Better come, Gracie,' said Faith, smiling, and Gracie yielded, and was given a safe seat between Faith and Margie. What a dinner it was, what gay pranks and jolly laughs and chatter. How cunning Jofie was, and what funny speeches little Tom made, and how they ate! Bless me, how they ate! No wonder Faith thought anxiously of the cellar with its scanty supplies. You'd have said they needed a cellar as large as a church to store up a winter's supply for that family. And wonder of wonders, Gracie got her full share of that dinner, though no wonder after all, for what appetizer is half so good as eating with half a dozen healthy, hungry children. One soon learns to make quick choice and get sure possession of one's own share, otherwise there is sad danger of leaving the table hungry but wiser.

The boys finally rushed away, leaving Faith and the little girls for a quieter, more leisurely finishing.

'Don't you have to take any medicine? My mamma gives me two kinds of tonics,' said Gracie, with just pride in her small ailments, though secretly relieved to have one day's respite.

'A good laugh is our tonic,' said Faith, very wisely.

'It's a great deal nicer,' sighed Gracie, wistfully. 'I wish I could come every day. It was the loveliest dinner.'

'Faith is the best cook I know,' said Margie, loyally, and Faith smiled, then looked thoughtful. Could she? Could she? Why not, if Gracie really liked it. She rose to clear away the dishes, but her brain worked excitedly. If Gracie really liked to come there to dinner, her mother could well afford to pay for it, and that would be something, anyway.

'Gracie,' she said, eagerly, as the little girls were starting for school, 'tell your mother that you like our dinners, and we would like you to come every day if she is willing.'

A week later, as Dr. Brandt sat by the sick man feeling his pulse and apparently listening to the plaintive recital of symptoms, he looked about the little room and at the deft, trim little housekeeper with keen interest and some amusement. 'She is a nice little housekeeper,' he thought, 'and just the kind of a girl that children take to,' for he had often remarked the gentle, motherly way in which

she watched over and cared for her little brood. As Faith stepped outside to the pump he heard her singing as happily as a bird, but she was demure enough as she again entered the living-room.

'So you have set up a soup-kitchen for the famished rich, have you?' said the doctor with a twinkle in his eye. 'Can you take a few more?'

'Oh, yes,' cried Faith, eagerly.

'My wife would like our Helen to try it for a few weeks; the long walk home at noon is rather hard for her after her sickness. It could go on the bill, you know, and I have two more,—one is Conway's boy. Conway leaves him too much to that lazy housekeeper's tender mercies, and then wonders why his boy is not like other boys. Can't bring a boy up on toast and tea and marmalade.'

'Could I do it, doctor?' Faith's cheeks were crimson with excitement.

The doctor smiled kindly down upon her.

'If you can satisfy that finicky Trowbridge child you can do anything,' he replied, 'and I'll thank you to do it, too. I am too busy to spend all the spring dosing a set of little pale-faces when all they need is plain, homely, nourishing food and no petting. My wife is coming over to talk it over with you. She has a dozen suggestions to make if you will take them. She wants you to sell cocoa and milk, five cents each, to children who bring their own lunch. Mr. Duncan here could bale it out while you tended to your little aristocrats. You might pick up quite a bit in both ways.'

What a faithless Faith she had been, and how wonderful the way was opening before her. Faith smiled joyfully at her father as she clasped his hand, but there were tears in her eyes.

'It looks as though we were coming out into the light, Faithie,' said her father—how strong and happy his voice was. 'The way has been pretty dark, doctor, and it has been harder every day to sit here helpless and see nothing between my children and starvation. But if there is something I can do to help, even a little, 'twill be like a medicine. I feel stronger already.'

'Starvation! Stuff!' exclaimed the doctor. 'If a half dozen healthy children can't keep themselves from starving in a place like this they don't deserve to live. No, don't thank me; I'm too busy. Good-day.'

Held Fast in a Bottle.

'When I was a little boy,' remarked an old gentleman, 'somebody gave me a cucumber in a bottle. The neck of the bottle was small, and the cucumber so large that it was not possible for it to pass through, and I wondered how it got there. But out in the garden, one day, I came upon a bottle slipped over a little green fellow that was still on the vines, and then I understood. The cucumber had grown in the bottle. I often see men with habits that I wonder any strong, sensible man could form, and then I think that likely they grew into them when they were young and cannot slip out of them now; they are like the cucumber. Look out for such bottles, boys.'—Michigan Christian Advocate.

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