

"But we are ladies now, if you please," you respond almost in chorus; and in the tones, some loud, some low, I detect various feelings—indignation, assurance, wounded dignity, or honest pleading, and I hasten to soothe you by saying I am sure you each have the elements of a lady, and may become well developed as such even if you are not now. Let us ask mother if she will not let us adjourn to her room for a private session, while she, the lady that she is! goes to the kitchen to counsel, help and comfort Bridget in the cares and some calamities of the morning.

Here you are. Five girls! Five ladies? We shall see. But Susie, dear, as you tumble that neatly made bed and throw a pillow in Belle's face with a bit of the veriest street slang, and now look angry at my implied rebuke, while you tap your foot violently against the bureau, do you think you are manifesting the lady which is in you? Do you know I feared some such display, as I saw that a tempest was gathering from some cause, and so I tried to draw you away from the notice of Uncle Cleareyes and those imitative children. When you are quite a lady, darling, as you are to be, your friends will not suffer with apprehension from your impulsive conduct.

And, Belle, my beautiful, perched on the corner of the table looking like a bouquet of roses on a bracket, do you think that real ladyhood consists simply and only in outside beauty without reference to the graces that should adorn the character! If so, you have a long study before you until you learn that your fair face must be kept so by that soul purity that allows neither stain nor spot.

And stately Rebecca, in that arm chair, like a throne, is your ideal of a lady one who shall rule and reign on the heights gained by ambition, either of the power of intellect or of wealth, or of some social position? These things do not constitute the lady, believe me, although it is not impossible for the flower of ladyhood to blossom in the rarefied atmosphere of your lofty pinnacle. If away up there you carry refinement, education, conscience, and a tender heart for humanity, you may be a lady indeed, and how I hope you will be.

Madge and Rue, meek little pussy-willows down there in the corner, I must not flatter you by saying that you are ladies already, yet that will not spoil you, since true ladies are humble. But your sweetness and gentleness tell their own story, and "how far your little candles shed their beams" you may not know till the angels tell you.

A lady, my girls, is not necessarily a perfected being, but she is daily striving for greater excellence, and thus she is bringing by degrees all parts of her being into their best estate. She is a person who is constantly doing her best where she is, so she improves. Ladyhood is a growth. Whether or not the girl or woman has the opportunity for education in the schools, yet she reaches forth for as many morsels possible of miscellaneous knowledge, and grasps them by those fine instincts that impel her to rise which are in the nature of the true lady.

The lady is thoughtful of others' interests; is kind to all in whatever station; shows a delicacy in the treatment of all; is considerate and just. She may be plain, she may sometimes be awkward, but there are no coarse fibers in her soul to be woven into her daily life, and by and by the web frees itself from roughness and uncouthness, and grows soft to the touch, and fit for the wear of a princess. The lady is clean of speech. Slang and vituperation and envious gossip are as foreign to her lips as to her mind. The true lady is pure in heart. She shall see God.

Are you really five ladies, Susie, Belle, Rebecca, Madge and Rue? Ah! your eyes are glowing with a hope and a promise for the future which begins now. I think I will not be ashamed to let any of you go down and spend the rest of the day with Uncle Cleareyes and those observing children.

Some philologists tell us that there is a half hidden root-meaning in the word "lady" that gives it the signification of "bread-giver." Is not that a pretty thought? Does not that help us to try to be ladies? We know that "bread is the staff of life."

Without it all would fall and die. How welcome such a gift to the perishing! How blessed and beautiful the giver! To be a bread-giver to the hungry and weary along life's way, what a privilege and joy! Souls are fainting all around us without this appropriate food. They stretch out hands for the bread of love and cheer and sympathy and knowledge. They beckon for the bread of help to uphold their threefold natures. To bring the bread to these needy ones is being a second Providence. Who would not have the high honor of being a lady and a bread-giver?

IN APRIL WOODS.

BY S. ELIZABETH BROWN.

There comes upon the willing breeze
The faint sweet breath of budding trees,
And hints of hidden flowers.
The soft earth sinks beneath the tread,
Where leaves and moss lie thickly spread.
Fragrant with April showers.
The curling fronds of fern unfold,
The wind flower lifts from 'neath the mold
Her lightly-swinging bells.



In sheltered nooks the lingering snow
Sinks softly into earth below,
Or tinkling streamlet sweels.

From death to life old Earth is springing,
And with new life sweet incense bringing
To waft her joy to Heaven,
While each sweet blossom seems to sing,
With every green and living thing,
Let praise to God be given.

