

'Are you sure you want me?' she said, wistfully.

'Quite sure,' said the girl.

A few minutes later they went up the quiet street together. The hall was lighted, the windows open, and as they passed up the steps there was a hum of voices.

'There's a lot of people here,' said Charlotte, happily, as they went in. 'We think we're going to make a good deal this time. We want to get that Sunday-school piano paid for if we can. They're pressing us for another payment. Did I tell you?'

'No,' murmured Sarah Ann, 'you didn't.'

She would have washed dishes willingly if she had known that, she thought.

It was a pretty sight that her eyes rested on. All about were scattered small white-covered tables, at which people were eating ice-cream and cake. Sarah Ann thought she had never seen so many pretty dresses in all her life.

Charlotte led her to a seat. 'Sit here,' she whispered, 'and I'll wait on you.'

She pushed her gently into a chair and departed hastily. Sarah Ann sat stiffly upright. Now that she had her wish, she felt ill at ease. She had never been waited upon before, and she thought that it wasn't such a blessing, after all, to sit with folded hands.

Charlotte came back in a few minutes, carrying on a tray a generous pyramid of ice-cream and a liberal supply of cake.

'I brought you the best cake we had, Sarah Ann,' she whispered, as she deposited her burden. 'Don't forget to try this banana cake. Mrs. Bright made it, and you know how good her cake always is. Good-by. I'll be back again if I can, but we're very busy.'

Left alone, Sarah Ann slowly ate her ice-cream. She tasted her cake, but left most of it. She felt strange and out of place, for in all her recollections this was the first time any one had ever waited upon her, and—she did not like it.

As she sat at the white-covered table among the well-dressed, light-hearted people, the conviction came home to her that it was not too late to change matters, after all. With an odd restlessness, she wanted to be up and doing as she had always done. In the camp of the Israelites there had been hewers of wood and drawers of water, and perhaps they were just as necessary to the well-being of the camp as the priests and the psalm-singers, and perhaps they received as great a reward.

And now she knew that she must bury her longings and her dreams, and be content with the humble things. He who planned all lives knew best.

Rising, she made her way steadily through the crowds to the rear room. Nobody was there but Charlotte Dent, and she was standing over a huge pan filled to the brim with dishes. Her delicate face was flushed, and there was a weary look in the sweet eyes.

She glanced up as Sarah Ann entered. 'It's weary work, Sarah Ann,' she said smiling faintly. 'I didn't know how hard until I tried it. I've been thinking about you all the time since I've been standing here.'

Sarah Ann went over to Charlotte and took her hands resolutely from the dish-pan. 'Give me your apron, child,' she said. 'There, you go and enjoy yourself. You're not fit for this work.'

Tying the gingham apron about her own waist, she plunged her calloused hands

into the water. The dishes came out with astonishing rapidity, clean and bright.

There was a relieved yet a reluctant look on Charlotte's face.

'I don't like to leave you, Sarah Ann,' she said, slowly. 'It doesn't seem right.'

'Yes, it does, too!' cried Sarah Ann. 'You go!'

She drew the slender figure nearer her. 'I'm sorry I said what I did,' she whispered. 'It—that feeling is all over now. I'll help you always after this.'

Sarah Ann watched Charlotte as she made her way among the people—a small, slight figure, with a delicate face, not fitted for the rougher work of life.

'Bless her!' murmured Sarah Ann; and then she turned to her work.

Her rebelliousness was gone, and in its place was a new peace. 'O Lord,' she whispered, through her tears, 'I ain't good for much; I can't preach or pray or sing or talk. I'm only a poor, plain old woman who can wash dishes and can't do anything else. Just a hewer of wood and a drawer of water, but maybe if I can't do the great things, you can let the little ones resound to your honor and glory. Forgive me my stubbornness and conceit. Teach me to do the humblest tasks with a willing heart. Help me to be a "workman that needeth not to be ashamed."'

'Are the ice-cream dishes ready, Sarah Ann?' called a chorus of gay voices. And three or four girls came fluttering in.

'What should we do without you? Nobody can wash dishes as you can. There's a whole crowd of people come up from Harmony, and they want ice-cream right away. Come, girls, we must step lively!'

Sarah Ann handed the bright, clean dishes rapidly to the waiting girls. Her face shone with a new light.

The mutiny was over, and Sarah Ann had slipped into her niche again, 'a workman that needeth not to be ashamed.'

Not to be Ministered To.

(Malthie D. Babcock, D.D., in 'The Independent'.)

O Lord, I pray,
That for this day
I may not swerve
By foot or hand,
From thy command,
Not to be served, but to serve.

This, too, I pray,
That for this day
No love of ease
Nor pride prevent
My good intent,
Not to be pleased, but to please.

And if I may,
I'd have this day
Strength from above,
To set my heart
In heavenly art,
Not to be loved, but to love.

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A Bunch of Roses—Their Mission.

A TRUE STORY.

(Estelle Mendell Amory, in the 'Union Signal'.)

'No, I have not raised any flowers for such purposes,' very emphatically replied Mrs. Closen to Mrs. Morton. 'I do not believe in feathering the nest of a "prison-bird."'

It was an oppressively hot day in August, and Mrs. Morton, the superintendent of flower mission work in one of the San Francisco unions, was calling upon her friends for the beautiful blossoms with which to cheer the hospital patients of the city prison and to encourage them to a better life. Although not particularly acquainted with Mr. and Mrs. Closen, she could not forbear, this time, to stop at their very cozy home and ask for some of the many rich and rare blossoms with which the yard was filled.

'There are several very sick men in the hospital now, and flowers just delight their hearts and often cure the soul while medicine is healing the body.'

To this came the chilling response given above, and it would have utterly unnerved a less calm and whole-souled worker.

'Christ's mission was to the erring, you know,' very sweetly replied Mrs. Morton, 'and the disciple must not be above his master.'

'But who ever knew of these flowers and things doing these "penitentiary birds" any good? I never did. It's clearly a case of casting pearls before swine,' retorted the good woman.

The gentle and loving Mrs. Morton was too wise to take offense at this. 'It doubtless does seem so to those not permitted, or rather privileged, to work among this unfortunate class; but I am situated to know that thousands are yearly inspired to a better life, and many a young man restored to his home, through this seemingly useless work,' and Mrs. Morton lingered under the cool and beautiful arbor long enough to relate two very touching cases that had come under her own observation, 'and there are hundreds of just such cases in every prison, that our good women reach and save,' she added.

'Perhaps so,' said Mrs. Closen, 'but it must be anything but agreeable work, and I can but believe that these men, if there is any manhood in them, will come out equally well by simply serving their penance, without the purest and best women in our land sacrificing themselves for them.'

But notwithstanding this unsympathetic, skeptical answer, the light and warmth of a new-found truth had entered, by means of the tiniest rays, into Mrs. Closen's mind and heart. Would it be fanned into a flame of life-giving warmth by easy, natural processes, or would it require the bitter gusts of sorrow?

It must not be thought that Mrs. Closen was an exceptionally hard or unfeeling woman, for such is not the case. She was a very loving, tender mother and kind neighbor, and her comfortable, carefully kept home was a most hospitable one, and daily the happy family of Mr. and Mrs. Closen, their two sons, Albert and Joe, and 'baby Nell,' as the only