

'Buy a Broom.'

LIZZIE RENDALL'S STORY.

BUY a broom! Buy a broom!' How well I can remember that cry, sounding down the street, as we children ran home from school one summer's evening!

'Oh, mother!' we cried; 'do give us a penny. The buy-a-broom girl has come back.'

'You're too old for such nonsense, Lizzie,' said mother, but she gave us the penny for all that; and very soon we were coming back, as proud as possible, twirling our brooms.

'Ah!' said mother, as she saw me going round into all the corners, making believe to sweep them out with the little feather broom, 'you'll not be so fond of sweeping when you've got to do it in earnest.'

'I shall always love sweeping!' I said. 'I think it's the very nicest work in the world.'

'I hope you'll always try to like the work you've got to do,' said mother, rather gravely. 'But you'll have to alter first. You take a fancy to a new job now and then, but it mostly lasts about as long as that little broom will.'

'I shall keep this little broom just as long as I live!' I answered her, feeling rather put upon my mettle; and I took it upstairs and hung it on the wall, over the bed that Annie and I shared together.

I daresay it would have hung there for a little while, and then have tumbled down and been swept away and thought no more of.

But just after that dear mother was taken ill, and when she felt that she wasn't going to get better she had all of us children in, one by one, to talk to us very seriously. And she talked to me about my being so ready to get tired of anything I had to do, and about God having set us all our daily work, and how we couldn't be

religious unless we tried to do it for His sake. And when I ran away into our room to have my cry out before I went downstairs, I saw the little broom hanging there, and remembered what mother had said the night I bought it.

I felt ever so many years older than I had done that night; but I said over again to myself that I would keep it always; and I took it down from the wall and wrapped it in soft paper and put it into the box that mother had given me to put my own special things in.

Well, in spite of the promise I made to myself then, I think I should have been surprised if any one could have foretold to me that I should really keep that little rubbishy thing for forty years.

But that is forty years ago, and I have it still, and it does not seem to me at all a rubbishy thing. It has been so much use to me, twice at least, that I shall keep it now till I die,—if it were for another forty years!

When I went out to service the broom went with me, in the bottom of my box. I hadn't often thought about it, or looked at it, of late; but when I was packing I saw it, and couldn't bear to throw it away,—just because of mother, and of all the years I'd kept it.

I didn't often think about it, or about a good many things that I ought to have remembered, during the next few months. Everything was new to me, and I had so much to see and to learn; and at first everything was so delightful, and no one ever *was* such a good servant as I was going to be!

Then things took a turn, and everything went wrong—and it wasn't worth while always to do my best—and I was sure that no one could give satisfaction in such a