

wake and toot his five-cent tin horn. Mrs. Ruggles was up and stirring about the house, for it was a gala day in the family. Gala day! I should think so! Were not her nine "children" invited to a dinner-party at the great house, and weren't they going to sit down free and equal with the mightiest in the land? She had been preparing for this grand occasion ever since the receipt of the invitation, which, by the way, had been speedily enshrined in an old photograph frame and hung under the looking-glass in the most prominent place in the kitchen, where it stared the occasional visitor directly in the eye, and made him pale with envy:

"BIRD'S NEST, Dec. 17, 188—.

"DEAR MRS. RUGGLES,—I am going to have a dinner-party on Christmas Day, and would like to have all your children come. I want them every one, please, from Sarah Maud to Baby Larry. Mamma says dinner will be at half-past five, and the Christmas tree at seven; so you may expect them home at nine o'clock. Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, I am, yours truly,

"CAROL BIRD."

Breakfast was on the table promptly at seven o'clock, and there was very little of it, too; for it was an excellent day for short rations, though Mrs. Ruggles heaved a sigh as she reflected that even the boys, with their India-rubber stomachs, would be just as hungry the day after the dinner-party as if they had never had any at all.

As soon as the scanty meal was over, she announced the plan of the campaign: "Now Susan, you an' Kitty wash up the dishes; an' Peter, can't you spread up the beds, so't I can git ter cuttin' out Larry's new suit? I ain't satisfied with his close, an' I thought in the night of a way to make him a dress out of my old plaid shawl—kind o' Scotch style, yer know. You other boys clear out from under foot! Clem, you and Con hop into bed with Larry while I wash yer underflannins; 'twont take long to dry 'em. Sarah Maud, I think 'twould be perfectly han'som if you ripped them brass buttons off yer uncle's policeman's coat an' sewed 'em in a row up the front o' yer green skirt. Susan, you must iron out yours an' Kitty's apurms; an' there, I came mighty near forgettin' Peory's stockins! I counted the whole lot last night

when I was washin' of 'em, an' there ain't but nineteen anyhow yer fix 'em, an' no nine pairs mates nohow; an' I ain't goin' ter have my children wear odd stockins' to a dinner-comp'ny, brought up as I was! Eily, can't you run out and ask Mis' Cullen ter lend me a pair o' stockins' for Peory, an' tell her if she will, Peory 'll give Jim half her candy when she gets home. Won't yer Peory?"

Peoria was young and greedy, and thought the remedy so much worse than the disease that she set up a deafening howl at the projected bargain—a howl so rebellious and so out of all season that her mother started in her direction with flashing eye and uplifted hand; but she let it fall suddenly, saying, "No, I won't lick ye Christmas day, if yer drive me crazy; but speak up smart now, 'in say whether yer'd ruther give Tim Cullen half yer candy ur go bare-legged ter the party?" The matter being put so plainly, Peoria collected her faculties, dried her tears and chose the lesser evil, Clem having hastened the decision by an affectionate wink, that meant he'd go halves with her on his candy.

"That's a lady," cried her mother. "Now, you young ones that ain't doin' nothin', play all yer want ter before noontime, for after ye git through eatin' at twelve o'clock me 'n Sarah Maud's goin' ter give yer such a washin' an' combin' an' dressin' as yer never had before an' never will again, an' then I'm goin' ter set yer down an' give yer two solid hours trainin' in manners; an' 'twont be no foolin' neither."

"All we've got ter do 's to eat!" grumbled Peter.

"Well, that's enough," responded his mother; "there's more 'n one way of eatin', let me tell yer, an' you've got a heap ter learn about it, Peter Ruggles. Land sakes, I wish you children could see the way I was fetched up to eat—never took a meal o' vittles in the kitchen before I married Ruggles; but yer can't keep up that style with nine young ones 'n yer Pa always off ter sea."

The big Ruggleses worked so well, and the little Ruggleses kept from "under foot" so successfully, that by one o'clock nine complete toilets were laid out in solemn grandeur on the beds. I say "complete;" but I do not know whether they would be called so in the best society. The law of compensa-

tion had been well applied; he that had necktie had no cuffs; she that had sash had no handkerchief, and *vice versa*; but they all had boots and a certain amount of clothing, such as it was, the outside layer being in every case quite above criticism.

"Now, Sarah Maud," said Mrs. Ruggles, her face shining with excitement, "everything is red up an' we can begin. I've got a boiler 'n a kettle 'n a pot o' hot water. Peter, you go into the back bedroom, an' I'll take Susan, Kitty, Peory an' Cornelius; an' Sarah Maud, you take Clem, n' Eily, n' Larry, one to a time, an' git as fur as you can with 'em, an' then I'll finish 'em off while you do yerself."

(To be continued.)

OUR DAILY BREAD.

ARCHDEACON FARRAR, preaching at Westminster Abbey to a very large congregation on a late Sunday afternoon, continued his remarks upon the Lord's Prayer, taking as his text the phrase, "Give us this day our daily bread." Proceeding to speak of the words of the petition, the preacher said: "The prayer is broad and simple. There is nothing in it of the pestering importunity of the sturdy vagrant, the base whine of greedy mendacity. I hope that none of you, my friends, neglect the good old simple, beautiful English practice of saying grace before meat, and that by teaching the significance of it to your children you save them from the inexpressible calamity of living lives which do not habitually look upwards to their source. I find that sometimes at the splendid tables of the wealthy the practice of saying grace is falling into neglect, and I am deeply sorry for it. I cannot bear to sit down to the simplest meal, much less to God's choicest bounties, to tables radiant with His richest fruit and His loveliest flowers, without humbly and thankfully acknowledging the Giver. And what but godless indifference can prevent us from thus acknowledging Him who giveth food to all flesh?"—*Evangelical Churchman.*

OFTEN the most useful Christians are those who serve their Master in little things. He never despises the day of small things, or else He would not hide His oaks in the acorns, or the wealth of a wheat field in bags of little seeds.—*T. L. Cuyler.*