

stand here planning! I don't know but you will, and your master too. Well, come on, let's go home. Hallo! Say, mister! Stop a minute!" he shouted at the top of his lungs, for the brown horse had been turned around and was speeding past him in the other direction. For a wonder, the young man heard the shout mid the din of other noises, and with some trouble checked Spunk's impatient feet.

"You made a mistake sir," said Reuben, pressing close to the sleigh and speaking with difficulty, for Spunk was determined to step on him, or toss him in the air, or bite him, at least. "This is a shiner you gave me, instead of a quarter."

"A what?"

"A shiner, sir, a ten-dollar gold-piece."

"Is it possible I was so careless as that!" and he reached forth his hand, and Reuben dropped the shining thing into it.

"Well I declare. What a careless fellow I am getting to be! Good for you, my boy. If it had fallen into some hands, I should never have seen it again. Spunk what is the matter with you to-night! You are worse than usual! Do go then, if you are in such a hurry." And Spunk went, leaving Reuben standing, staring at him. He stood perfectly still for a minute or more gazing after the flying horse. Then once more he spoke to the Trotties.

"Well, there is one thing I would like to know, and that is, who is going to pay us for standing out there in the snow and holding that horse for ten whole minutes?"

Nobody answered him, and he turned and walked gravely, and somewhat slowly towards home.

CHAPTER IV.

ANOTHER DISAPPOINTMENT.

Beth flattened her nose against the window pane, and watched for Reuben until it grew so dark that she could not tell one person from another; then she wandered around the room, occasionally opening the door and peering out, letting in a great rush of cold air, and saying every few minutes, "Mother what do you suppose has become of Reuben?" Mother had but little to say, but was almost as glad as Beth was, when at last they heard his step.

"Why, where in the world!" began Beth; but her mother interrupted her.

"Why, Reuben, my boy, how cold and tired you look! Where have you been?"

"I've been to the end of the world, or the end of the city, or most to the end of North street, anyhow," and he sat down wearily in a chair, and put "Trotties" on the stove-heap.

"Those fellows are tired, you better believe," he said, looking kindly down to them; then, with Beth fluttering around him, and Mrs. Stone taking last stitches in the shirt she was trying to finish before supper, he told his story.

"Well I never,—no, never in all my life!" said Beth, in great indignation, when he stopped for breath; "and so you had all that tramp and didn't get a cent!"

"Not a cent," said Reuben, dolefully; he was too tired to be cheerful.

"Never mind," said the patient mother, "I dare say he was so astonished that he forgot it."

"Forgot it?" repeated Beth; "more like he wanted to save his money. I think he is just the meanest man I ever heard of. I hope I'll meet him and his old brown horse some day, and I'll stop him to tell him so."

"He looked like a nice man," said Reuben, who couldn't quite make up his mind to keep still and let Spunk's master be abused; "and I don't believe it was because he was mean, or else he wouldn't have given me a quarter in the first place; I never knew a boy to get more than a dime for holding a horse, and most ways it is only five cents; that makes me think, I got five cents for taking care of Mr. Anson's horse while this morning; and he dived his hand into his pockets, brought out the lonesome five-cent piece, and with a queer little smile handed it to his mother."

"It is every cent that the man of the house has earned to-day," he said, sadly.

"S'posin' he had spent that for a cigar, instead of bringing it to his mother!" said Mrs. Stone, soothingly. "I know boys who never bring their mothers even five cents."

"Humph!" said Beth; but whether it was at the thought of the cigar, or Spunk's master, or what, she didn't say. Then they sat down to supper. "There's one comfort," Beth said, "it hasn't gone and

got cold, while we were waiting." And at this, mother and Reuben had to laugh; so little by little, they grew more cheerful.

"Well Trotties," said Reuben, as soon as his bread and milk were gone, "you and I must trot out and tend to Dorcas; we aren't often so late. I don't know what she'll say to us." "Dorcas was the cow that furnished them with a quart of milk a day, and she lived in the stable that backed up against their one window. Reuben was very faithful to her, and was usually on hand to milk and take care of her, almost an hour earlier than it was to-night. So he hurried away, but much sooner than a cow can be milked, he came hurrying back.

"Mother, they've sold Dorcas!" he exclaimed, as soon as the door opened. "Oh dear!" said Mrs. Stone, and she sat down the big pan of water she was carrying, on a chair, and stood and looked at him. "When did they do that?"

"Just now, a man took her away less than an hour ago. Mr. Baker said it was a kind of nuisance to keep a cow in the city, anyhow, and she didn't give as much milk as she ought to, and boys were always bothering him about being late,—wasn't that mean, mother? I haven't been late but twice since I took care of her, and the long and short of it is she's gone!"

"Oh dear!" said Mrs. Stone, again; and she lost of that quart of milk a day, was a great deal to her; she didn't see how they were going to get along without it. As for Beth, she felt almost guilty; hadn't she, that very afternoon, almost wished that they hadn't a quart of milk a day? Well, she had her wish for once. Reuben presently came over to where the pan of water sat.

"What do you want to do with this, mother?" he asked, and on being told, he went to the back door and pitched it out into the darkness. It was natural for him to save his mother's steps. I think he was more careful about that than Beth was. The work was all done, now, and they got around the little stand,—this little family,—much graver than usual. Reuben brought his book and slate, and tried to interest himself in an example in arithmetic. His mother encouraged him to try and keep on with his lessons, in the hope that some day he could go to school, but the world looked very dark to him to-night. The old year was almost gone and the coal was almost gone, and Dorcas was quite gone.

"Come, children," Mrs. Stone said, after the ciphering and studying had gone on for some time in silence, "the fire is real low; it is time we were in bed. I'll just step in and see if Mother Perkins is comfortable for the night, and then we'll go." "Mother Perkins" was an old and feeble woman, who lived all alone in one room of the house, and sometimes was unable to leave her bed for days together, and had to wait for chance callers to give her something to eat. Mrs. Stone had taken her under her special care for the last few days, and went every night to see that she was made as comfortable as the dreary room would admit.

Reuben and Beth, thus left to themselves, stared at the dying coals in silence for a few minutes, then Beth said,—

"What would you have bought with that quarter, s'posin' it had been a quarter, and had belonged to you?"

"Well," said Reuben, meditatively, "I had more than two dozen plans. I guess if I'd done half with that I thought about, it would have been just a wonderful quarter. You see, in the first place, I wanted to get some coal, a whole bushel at once; we are dreadfully low on coal, I don't know I am going to rake and scrape enough together to do till Saturday; then I wanted to get a quarter of a pound of real good tea for mother. 'It is regular hay stuff that she drinks now; I know by the way the clerk sneers at it as he does it up, and it is cheaper by pretty near a dollar on the pound than the real tea. Joe Bradley bought a pound of the real tea for a Christmas present for his mother, and he paid ninety cents a pound! What do you think of that?"

"My!" said Beth, impressively. She knew how much a pound her mother's tea was.

"Well, then there was two or three things I kind o' wanted to get for you; I shan't tell you what they were, cause its no ways likely I shall get around to them now, till I'm of age." Reuben had always believed that when he was of age, something wonderful would happen by which he could do for Beth some of the many things that he knew she would like. Just how he was going to

get the money for all these things, he had not yet planned to his satisfaction; but when a fellow was of age, he argued, of course he could get money.

"Oh, I don't care," said Beth, quickly; "not about myself, you know. I'm sorry, about the coal, and I should like first rate to have had mother had some real tea. I know hers that she has once in awhile, is of no account, by the way it smells; I smell the tea every once in awhile, when I go to Redwood to take the milk you know. My! how it smells."

"You won't smell it any more," said Reuben, shaking his head sorrowfully. "How he could go and sell that cow is more than I can think." "The folks at Redwood will be sorry, too," said Beth; "they liked that milk so much. The silver cup used to be out in the kitchen with his silver cup waiting for me to come, and he would just wait when he saw me."

"It won't make very much difference to them," Reuben said, shaking his head; "folks that've got as much money as they have, it don't matter when a man sells his cow, they can just go to another man and take out their pocket-books and say, 'Here I want some milk of you every day; how much is to pay?' Or, if it comes to that, they can up and buy a cow,—two of them if they want to,—just as easy as they can turn their hand over. I tell you what it is, Beth, when I'm of age, money is one of the things I'm going to have!"

"How are you going to get it?" asked practical Beth.

"Yes, that's the question; that part of it isn't decided yet; but then, you know, I've got a good while to think it over." And, with a gleam of fun in his bright dark eyes, Reuben arose, walked to the mantel and proceeded to light the end of a candle which showed him the way to his "suite of rooms." This is what he always called them when he felt gay, in imitation of a lady for whom his mother sewed, and who was fond of describing to her sewing woman her grand house in the country. Reuben's "suite of rooms" had, evidently been once a large old-fashioned parlor, in two compartments, with a sliding door between. The house was an old-fashioned one, looking small enough now by the side of many larger ones that had sprung up around it; still it had once been thought of good size, and several families lived in it now! But they were all families who could afford but one room apiece, or, at the very utmost, two. As Reuben lighted his candle, Beth, watching the process, was suddenly reminded of a bit of news that she had treasured up for Reuben.

"The south room is rented, Reuben."

"Is it?" the boy asked, turning around with an interested face; the pleasantest room in the house, with two large windows in it; standing vacant now for several weeks, because no one came that way who could afford to pay for the sunshine that streamed in at those two south windows. You would be surprised to know how much difference that made in the rent. Reuben and Beth did not believe that sunshine was free; they had good reasons for knowing the contrary.

"Who's taken it?"

"A woman; kind of old, and not so very old either. She's got grey hair, and she is tall and straight, and her face looks sort of nice; not pretty, and not exactly pleasant as I know of, but the kind of face one likes. Anyhow, I like her chair; I just wish you could have seen it! The nicest chair, covered all over with bright queer-looking stuff; it couldn't have been calico; I never saw any calico like that—and it was so pretty. Reuben, it would be so nice if we could get mother a chair like that for a Christmas present."

"So it would be to get her a house, and a barn and a cow," said Reuben, good humoredly. "And about as easy, for all I see. Well, Beth, I must put the trotties to for the night." And he took his bit of lighted candle, and went off to his clothes-press.

(To be continued.)

SOMETHING TO DECIDE.

She wasn't home-sick, at least not exactly, though it was her first day at school, but she was thinking. It was almost bed-time, and she dreaded it. For the first time in her life she must get herself ready for bed in a room with three other girls, strangers to her, and two of them laughed and chat-

ted so much that they made her nervous. If she could only slip away to her room before the others, and have a few minutes of quiet! But there was no use in trying for that; the moment the bell rang they were all expected to troop to their rooms. If the truth must be told, Sophie Baker felt a little bit like a coward. She did not mind brushing out her lovely hair before the girls, nor getting out her pretty dressing case, and using her ivory-handled tooth-brush, nor even putting on her dainty night-dress with its delicate lace trimmings; the thing that she did not want to do was to kneel down before those girls to pray. She knew that these were girls who never did this; she heard Mollie Andrews only a few days before she left home laughing about a girl in school who kept up her "baby" habits, and always "said her prayers" before she went to bed. Mollie Andrews had been at boarding-school for two years, and knew how things went. What was to be done? Sophie was the youngest of all the girls, and could not bear to be laughed at, and she "most knew," she said to herself, that none of those girls prayed. Yet she had never in her life gone to sleep without praying, and it shocked her to think of doing so. Of course she wouldn't; but couldn't she slip into bed, cover her head closely, and pray as well as she could on her knees? This is what she asked herself with a beating heart, while the girls buzzed around her, busy with a last glance at their next day's lessons. Sophie had been very carefully taught; she knew if she were sick and could not kneel down, God would be as well pleased with her prayer in bed, as he would on her knees. But how about creeping into bed and praying because she was ashamed to have others see her?—It made her cheeks glow to think of it. "I'll never do it," she said at last, decidedly, "I shall kneel down and pray as usual, even if they all laugh and poke fun at me." After that she felt happy, it was so comfortable to know just what she was going to do.

It took her longer to brush her hair than usual that evening, and the merry voices around her did not quiet the beating of her heart, but at last she dropped on her knees and buried her face in a pillow, and tried to pray. It was very still all about; the girls might be planning some fun, but they did it quietly. A sweet sense of being with Jesus stole into Sophie's heart, and when she arose the loud beating, which it had almost seemed to her the rest could hear, was still.

But why were the others so quiet? She looked around her, every girl was on her knees. One by one they arose quietly, with no air about them of having done anything strange or unusual; they kissed one another good-night, their voices just as happy as before, but a little quieter, and very soon the light was out, and they were all resting on their pillows. "I have much people in this city," it was part of a verse Sophie had learned not long before, and it kept floating in her mind as she went to sleep.

Perhaps the Lord Jesus had "Much people" in that school where she had foolishly imagined herself the only one who prayed. She did not feel lonely any more, and it seemed to her very silly to have been afraid to pray. What if she jumped into bed without it, and all the others had knelt? How ashamed she would have felt!—*Pansy in S. S. Messenger.*

ENGLISH MUFFINS.—One quart of flour; one tea-spoonful of salt; one-third of a cake of compressed yeast; one-third of a cupful of liquid yeast; one cupful and a half of water. Have the water blood-warm. Dissolve the yeast in one-third of a cupful of cold water. Add it and the salt to the warm water, and gradually stir it into the flour. Beat the dough thoroughly; cover, and let it rise in a warm place until it is spongy (about five hours). Sprinkle the bread-board with flour. Shape the dough into balls about twice the size of an egg, and drop them on the floured board. When all the dough has been shaped, roll the balls into cakes about one-third of an inch thick. Lay these on a warm griddle, which has been lightly greased, and put the griddle on the back of the stove, where there is not much heat. When the cakes have risen a little, draw the griddle forward and cook them slowly, turning often to keep the flat shape. It will take about twenty minutes for them to rise on the griddle, and fifteen to cook. Tear them apart butter them and serve.