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LITTLE KINDNESSES.

BY FRANCIS FORRESTER, ESQ.

ONE bright summer's morning two girls, about twelve years of age, were walking along a charming lane in the country. The birds were filling the air with their sweet melody. The flowers shone like gems on the grassy banks which lined the road sides and gave their perfume without stint to the gentle breezes. The two girls seemed delighted, and chatted as merrily as rooks or blackbirds as they sauntered slowly along.

By and by they heard a sob. "What's that?" said Ida; "I thought I heard some one moaning."

"It's that little muff beyond the big tree yonder," said Rhoda, pointing to a child seated by the road side and weeping as if some great trouble had crushed her.

"Poor child!" exclaimed Ida; "let us see what ails her. Come, Rhoda."

"Nonsense, Ida! Let the little goose alone. What business have we with her trouble?" replied Rhoda, pettishly.

But Ida, without heeding this selfish speech, ran toward the weeping child, and in the softest and gentlest of tones said:

"What's the matter, little girl? Tell me what makes you cry, dear. Perhaps I can help you."

Lottie—that was the crying child's name—looked into Ida's face, and seeing love and pity written there, replied:

"I've lost my basket, miss, O! O!"

"How did you lose it, my dear?" asked Ida.

After a long sob Lottie replied, "If you please, ma'am, I had been down to Mr. Flint's after some butter for my mother. O dear! I set my basket down in the road while I went to pick some violets, and when I turned round my basket was gone. O dear, dear, what shall I do! what shall I do! Mother will whip me so."

"Poor child!" exclaimed Ida.

"It's nothing to us. Come along!" said Rhoda, pulling Ida by the dress as she spoke.

But Ida did not regard Rhoda's words. She was too deeply touched by Lottie's grief. So she said:

"Who could have taken it? Did you see no one in the lane?"

"Yes, ma'am, I seed Dick Flynn just now. Maybe he took it, but I don't know. O dear, O! O! How my mother will beat me!"



"Poor child!" sighed Ida as she looked down the lane in search of some sign of Dick Flynn's person. As she was looking that unworthy scamp pushed his mop-like head and dirty face from behind a big tree near by. Miss Ida caught his eye. Seeing he was discovered, Dick brought the basket, and laying it at Ida's feet, said:

"Here's her basket, ma'am. I only took it for fun," and away he scampered, making the air ring with his loud ha, ha, ha; ha, ha, ha.

But poor Lottie sobbed as hard as ever, very much to Ida's surprise. So, taking her by the hand, she said:

"Come, child, don't cry any more, but take your basket and run home like a good little girl."

"Please, ma'am, I'se afraid mother'll whip me for staying so long," sobbed Lottie.

"O, is that all? Well, I'll go with you and tell your mother how it happened. Come, my dear, cheer up and walk along with us," replied Ida.

"Don't, Ida! Don't bother any more with that little drab!" said Rhoda, sharply.

"O yes, coz, let us go with her and comfort her poor little heart all we can," replied Ida, taking Lottie's hand and moving down the lane.

Rhoda followed with unwilling feet. When they reached Lottie's cottage they saw her mother standing with arms a kimbo at the door. She was a large, coarse woman, and her face looked as if a

great storm of anger had been gathering in her heart, and was ready to burst upon the head of poor little Lottie. But Ida's presence acted as a lightning-rod, drew the anger quickly out of her heart. Ida explained the cause of Lottie's delay, and the child escaped the scolding and whipping she had so much dreaded. Ida certainly shed sunshine upon Lottie's heart that morning.

That was a little act of kindness in Ida, wasn't it? It did not cost her much, only a few moments of time, a few gentle words, and a few steps out of her way. Yet it saved Lottie a day of suffering, and prevented her mother from feeling the misery and guilt of an angry spirit. As a little grain of mustard produces a great shrub, so her little act of kindness wrought great comfort in Lottie's heart.

Little acts of kindness! How beautiful they are! They are the flowers which give beauty to character. Does not Ida's act make her beautiful in your eyes? But Rhoda—laugh! You don't like

her a bit, do you? Well, if you like Ida best, and I know you do, wont you imitate her? Wont you do, at least, one little act of kindness to some one every day? Wont you also let Rhoda's gruffly selfishness stand to you as a beacon does to seamen—let it warn you to give unkind conduct a wide, very "wide berth?"

For the Sunday-School Advocate.

THE HOUSE BY THE HIGHWAY.

BY RENA RAY.

ALMA lived in a large house, but it wasn't a pleasant house, for it stood right on the dusty highway, exposed all day long to the burning sun. Not a tree grew near to shelter the roof, or vine or shrub to protect the windows, or a spire of grass to enliven the door-way. There was no yard around the house, or a bit of a garden attached to it, so there was nothing green, not even a brier, to be seen. The ground all around was baked by the sun in dry weather till it was as hard as a brick and filled with great cracks, and when there was a rainy spell it was like a bed of mortar, and as sticky as tar.

Just below the house there was a pool, or pond, of stagnant, greenish water, filled with frogs, which kept up an incessant piping and groaning all day long and all night too. On one side of the house was a blacksmith's shop, on the other a stable, and