

Neighbours.

"Oh dear!" said Alma, "there are people moving in next door, and there is a horrid little boy in the family. I saw him."

"Why, dearie," said her mamma, "how do you know he is horrid?"

"All boys are horrid," replied Alma with an air of wisdom. "I know their ways. I know just what to expect from this one. He'll always be throwing stones or shouting at our cat, and he'll climb up in our trees and break the limbs, and I'll never have any peace down at my playground, for he'll come 'snooping' around, and will try to tease me. I know." Alma spoke so decidedly, and so like an older person, that her mamma laughed.

"Perhaps not. I wouldn't form my opinion too soon. Wait and see."

But Alma was convinced that "a horrid boy" was bound to destroy her pleasure for the summer; and if by chance she met little Robbie Sargeant on the street, she assumed a most lofty air and never looked his way. Once she saw him looking wistfully over the fence when she was playing in the

garden, and she immediately picked up her toys and strode into the house with indignation.

"I told you so, mamma!" she exclaimed. "That horrid boy is just bent on worrying me. He was actually sneaking along and peeping over our fence."

"A very harmless proceeding," said her mother. "Why shouldn't he look over our fence, if he wants to? He seems a lonely little fellow, very gentle and quiet. Why didn't you speak to him?"

"The idea!" exclaimed Alma.

"My little girl," continued her mother, "you must not let your prejudices run away with your good sense. I have called upon Mrs. Sargeant. She is a lovely, cultivated woman, and I am sure her little son is a well-behaved, gentlemanly boy. Now, do not let me hear any more foolish complaints. Remember your duty to your neighbour."

Alma was somewhat abashed, and went out into the garden again. It was a very hot day, and the very coolest spot was her shady playground in one corner of the grounds. A little brook ran along at the foot of the garden slope, and Alma thought it would be great fun to paddle about for a while. She was often allowed to do this on hot days, for her parents knew how such innocent amusements were counted as very important and delightful pleasures by children. So Alma paddled about to her heart's content, and then went up to her playground.

"My! how warm it is! I believe I'll take off my jacket," she said. "Mamma will not mind, as long as I am comfortable." So off went the jacket, displaying the round, white arms and dimpled shoulders of the little girl.

Just as Alma had seated herself to plan what she should do next, into her lap fell a great bunch of flowers—roses, and heliotrope and mignonette—oh, so sweet!

Alma picked up the flowers and looked up quickly, then she dropped her head in absolute confusion; for leaning over the fence, looking at her, was little Robbie Sargeant.

"What shall I do?" thought Alma. Her first impulse was to drop the flowers and run; but that would look as if she were afraid—"As if I would let him know that I would run from a boy!" Then she thought she would hand the flowers back in a very dignified way and say, "Excuse me, but I do not want your flowers." That, she thought, would be very haughty and elegant, but she considered it wouldn't be true—"For I do want them."—and Alma was at least truthful. So she shyly glanced up, as if for inspiration.

Such a wistful, sweet little face was turned toward her!—and an eager smile broke out as Alma's eyes met the eyes looking down at her. So she said very softly, "Thank you."

"Mamma told me I might gather them for you," said Robbie. "Your name is Alma, isn't it? I think it is such a pretty name."

Alma was fast beginning to feel very much ashamed of herself, and didn't know what to do to hide her embarrassment. All she could think of to say was, "Your name is Robbie."

"Yes," was the reply; "but mamma calls me Robin almost always."

"I wonder if it is because you like cherries?" said Alma, with a lingering recollection of boys raiding the cherry-trees in her father's garden.

Robbie laughed—such a happy, merry laugh that Alma laughed too. "I

like cherries, but mamma will not let me climb the trees in our garden till I am a little bigger."

"I didn't know you had cherry-trees," was Alma's reply.

"Oh, yes. They are on the other side of the house where you can't see them. I wish"—here came a little hesitation, as if there were some doubt of how the invitation would be received—"I wish you'd come over and see our garden. I am so lonely, for I don't know anybody here."

"Aren't you a mean girl?" said Alma to herself.

"Won't your mamma let you?" asked Robbie, waiting for an answer.

"You'd better come over and play with me," said Alma bravely. She thought that would be a little more cautious, and at the same time more neighbourly.

Robbie joyfully accepted the suggestion, and was over the fence in a twinkling.

An hour later, Alma's mother came out to find her. She was attracted to the spot by shouts of laughter, and was secretly amused and gratified at finding the little neighbours on the best of terms, having such a good time that she hadn't the heart to disturb them; and it was late in the afternoon before the little girl appeared in the house.

"O mamma!" she said, "he isn't a horrid boy at all. He is just as nice as can be, and we have had such fun! May I go over to his house and play in his garden? May I, mamma?"

Mamma's face wore a very quizzical look.

"Now, mamma," Alma went on, "I know just what you were thinking. Don't say a word. I was the horrid one, I know I was. But Robbie doesn't know it. And next time I'll know better, and I'll believe you when you tell me people are nice. Say I may go. Please, that's a dear!"

So mamma said "Yes;" and for the rest of the time that Robbie and Alma were neighbours there was no more talk of "horrid boys."

A Little Girl's Courtesy.

It was Betty's first visit to the city, and of all she saw nothing pleased her more than the crowds of people, the hurrying, busy multitude which reminded her so much of the swarms of bees in the back of the orchard at home.

Aunt Kate, who had feared that she might be homesick, found her guest very easy to entertain. When one is six years old, even the commonest things seem full of interest.

They went down town shopping one day and came home late in the afternoon. The street-car was full, and Betty, curled away in a corner, scanned the rows of people with observant eyes. At last a little brown woman with her arms full of bundles climbed into the car and stood close at Betty's side.

She was a weary-looking little woman with bright eyes. As the car lurched around the corner, she staggered and seemed in danger of falling. Betty slipped from her seat and said, in a sweet, high voice, "Please ma'am, won't you sit down here, 'cause you look so tired an' your bundles are so big?"

"Why Betty!" said Aunt Kate blushing, and the little woman blushed too under the brown of her skin, and shook her head, stammering her thanks in broken English.

Then the tall gentleman opposite rose to his feet, gently put the little brown woman into his seat, and looked

down upon Betty with a smile which warmed her heart. And though Betty never dreamed of such a thing, every face in the two long rows wore a kindly look, a reflection of that simple act of childish courtesy.

The Dog, the Boy, and the Bag.

You have often seen a dog carry a basket or a pail, or even a newspaper folded up. I knew a big dog who would find his master's slippers, picking them out from among a dozen pairs put in a pile to test him. This same dog would find his master's umbrella, and carry it blocks to his office. The other day I heard of a little dog who had been taught to carry things for his mistress. He was a little poodle. One day his mistress was going out shopping, and she put down on a chair a small bag in which was some jewelry. Just then she left the room. Fido came in, concluded there was some work for him to do, and took the bag in his mouth and ran out the front door. He carried the bag blocks, to the house of his mistress' friend, where he left it at the front door.

The mistress was frightened when she came back and found the bag had disappeared: she thought a thief had taken it, and notified the police, who began hunting for the thief. A small boy had seen the dog carrying the bag. Whether the dog acted guiltily, or whether the bag seemed to big for such a small dog to carry, I do not know, but the boy followed the dog back, giving the bag to its owner.

I wish I knew whether Fido ever learned that he had done wrong.

Happiness.

A little girl of nine years old had ten cents in her bank. She was "saving up," she said, to buy a toy or a book. One day she read of another child whose little life was spent, so far as she could, in doing for others. The happiness of such a life was so great, she said, that she wished all children would try the same plan themselves, and be happy as she was. The little girl first mentioned was moved by what she read, and became very anxious to do something too.

Her mother had a message for her to take one day. She had been thinking all the morning what she could do for others. Before going out she went upstairs to tidy herself. While there, and just before leaving her room, her eyes fell on her bank in which lay her ten cents. She thought: "I will take my money up town, and if I see a little beggar I will give it to him."

She opened her bank, took the money and went her way. She soon met a little girl about the same age as herself who appeared greatly in need, and to her she gave her coin. She was very happy at the thought of the help she had given to the little stranger, and she is now wondering what she can do next.

Every one can be happy in this way. The way is open always.

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