

LITTLE FOLKS

The Star Island Picnic.

The kitchen was the busiest place in the house. Nora was making sandwiches; Aunt Helen was packing up paper plates and napkins; mamma was seasoning 'stuffed' eggs.

'Amy,' she called, suddenly, 'you must run to the store and get me some more eggs! I haven't as many as I thought. Remember, we must be at the dock in thirty-five minutes.'

Amy dropped the cake-tin she had been scraping. 'Yes'm!' she beamed,

'How willing the dear child is!' thought Aunt Ellen, as Amy ran off, all smiles. 'I wish Bess liked to do errands.'

In just seven minutes by the kitchen clock a breathless little girl was back from the corner grocery. Tightly clasped in one hand she held by their long sticks a pair of the fascinating dainties known as 'all-day candy-balls.'

'See, mamma!' she cried. 'I had six sticks to carry back, and Mr. Summers gave me a new candy-ball for 'em, and I had a penny besides, and so here's one for Bess, too, and they'll last us all the time going down on the boat!'

'Well, let me have the eggs,' said mamma, reaching for the basket.

Amy's face changed from triumph to despair. 'Mamma,' she groaned, 'I forgot—oh, I never thought—I'll go back!'

'Amy Reynolds, do you mean to say all you remembered was that silly sweet stuff?' cried mamma; but Amy was already out of the gate.

'She's been counting on this picnic to Star Island all summer, and she'll be nearly broken-hearted if we miss the boat, but I declare, it wouldn't be such a bad thing if it only cured her dreadful heedlessness!' mamma mourned to Aunt Helen.

'Well, we'll go right along getting ready. It's stopped raining, and maybe we'll get there yet,' encouraged aunty, finding it impossible not to smile at the memory of Amy's look of utter consternation



when she peered into the empty basket.

Into the store again the little girl rushed like a whirlwind. 'O, Mr. Summers, please, I want eggs, too, half a dozen!' she panted; but Mr. Summers was tying up a parcel of sugar for Mrs. Crouse.

'Anything else, ma'am?' he asked, folding down the ends of the bag as neatly and tying the red-and-white twine as deliberately as if there was no boat going to start for Star Island at half past nine.

'Oh, please, won't you get them for me!' pleaded Amy, with tears in her eyes, turning to Peter, the grocer's boy. 'I forgot, and we're going to have a picnic, and it's most time to start!'

'Sorry, but I can't stop a minute. Got to go right out with this waggon!' called back Peter, as he shouldered a sack of flour. Mr. Summers will wait on you in a minute.'

Amy's little face looked fairly thin from anxiety as she flew home

at last with the six eggs. Suppose there should be a blockade on the car-track? Suppose they should be just one car too late, and papa would be standing at the landing, and say, 'No use to hurry now; our boat's gone!' Suppose they could not have the picnic, and Aunt Helen and Bess would go home without ever seeing Star Island, and it would be her fault!

All the way down-town Amy sat on the very edge of the seat, shivering with anxiety, longing to jump out and run every time the car stopped. When finally they got off, and papa grasped all the baskets and bundles he could carry, and led them on the run down to the dock and across the gangplank just as the whistle gave a last warning toot and the paddles began to splash in the water, the little girl sank into the nearest deck chair in a miserable huddle, and burst into a passion of tears.

'Don't feel badly any more! We did make it, after all,' mamma