

# SUNBEAM

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## ALICE'S TALENT.

Alice sat with her Bible on her lap. She had been reading, but now she sat very still, with a troubled look on her face. "Oh, dear!" said she after a while, "I don't believe I have got any talent. Now, there's Emma. Miss Wilson says she certainly has a talent for music, and Lou Benson can draw anything she sees, and is going to take painting lessons; but I don't seem to have a talent for anything. Maybe it only means grown people; but the verse says, 'He called his own servants, and oh, I do want to be one of the Lord's servants.'" And one or two tears fell on Alice's open Bible.

Aunt Bell happened to pass through just then, and noticing Alice's downcast face, stopped to ask, "What is the matter with this little girl?"

"Because, oh, because—I don't seem to have any talent, Aunt Bell."

"Let us read those verses over together, dear," said auntie. "It is a good thing to think about what we are reading, Alice, if we cannot discover at once what our talent may be."

So Alice and Aunt Bell read the parable together.

"Do you notice, Alice," it says, "to every man according to his 'several ability'?" What does that mean, do you think?"

"As much as he was able to have or to do; don't it, auntie?"

"Yes. and I don't think the Bible anywhere tells us we must do any more than we are able to do. God gives each one of us talents according to our several ability. You are only a little girl and he requires of you only a little girl's work."

"But what can I do, auntie? I can't sing in the choir, as Emma does; I can't give to our mission society as Lizzie Barr

does, for her father gives her more for her monthly spending money than I can have in a whole year. I'm not smart about writing compositions as Nellie Gifford is. So what can I do?"

"All those things are talents certainly.

Alice, going slowly down-stairs, "I believe I'll go over to Nellie Gifford's and talk with her about it. Maybe we can find some opportunities to do good."

She was taking her hat from the rack when Brother Will came whistling through the hall.

"O Allie!" said he, "you're the very girl I'm looking for. I want these gloves mended, please, and a button on my overcoat, and I'm in a hurry." Alice was about to say, "I'm in a hurry, too;" but she kept back the disobliging word, and only said, "Wait till I get my basket."

Then she sat down and mended the gloves, replaced the missing button, and neatly sewed a ripped place in the overcoat lining.

"I wonder if this can be called an opportunity," she said aloud, as she worked, forgetful of Brother Will's presence; for he had taken up a newspaper and was half hid behind it.

"To be sure it can," said Will, laughing. "A very good one for me too. I advise you, Allie, to always make the most of opportunities, when you can help people as nicely as you are doing now."

"I was thinking about the talents," said Alice, simply. "What is yours, Will?"

"It seems to be to make work for a dear little sister. Really, I'm afraid I don't think as much about that as I might—or ought. Is that done? I'm much obliged." And Will kissed her and went off in a quick way, as if he feared she would say more.

"Dear little Alice" she did not know she had improved two opportunities, and that her words were stirring her brother's conscience uneasily.

"It's too near lunch time to go to Nellie's now," thought Alice. "I can read



ALICE'S TALENT.

But, Alice, did you ever think about opportunities? There is a great talent given to all—"

Somebody called Aunt Bell just then, and with a hasty kiss to her little niece she left the room! "Opportunities!" said