

"IF I WERE A GIRL AGAIN."

When Margaret went up to bed, she stood for a moment self-absorbed in the middle of the room, then she exclaimed aloud, "Oh! I wish all the girls could have heard it." Then, as the suggestion flashed over her, she cried joyfully: "I know what I'll do? "I'll write it down just as they said it."

The next moment, with her pad in her lap, she was sitting under the gas and with her sharp pencil began to scribble:

"This afternoon the Sewing Circle met here, and when I came in after school, I peeped in the front parlor door, and the ladies were such a busy, pretty sight that I stood to look; and then one of them, a dear beautiful old lady, said something I liked, and I stopped to listen.

"She said, 'If I were a girl again I would be more thoughtful of my mother. For not until I had girls of my own to love and work for did I begin to realize what my mother had done for me.'

"Then another lady, middle-aged, with a sharp, worried face, spoke quickly: 'If I were a girl again, I would learn to do something to support myself. Here am, forty-two, as you all know, and I can't earn my breakfast unless I go out and do housework. Nobody cares for an unskilled workwoman—and that's what I am. It's a blessing to me that I don't have to earn my own breakfast.'

"'If I could be a girl again,' said a lady with a sweet voice, 'I would never leave Sunday school. You can't think how I envy the girls who have grown up in a Sunday school as if it were a home. And they are as much at home as I am among my children. I've been out of Sunday school thirty years, and it is a loss that never can be made up to me.'

"(I have been out of Sunday school a year. I left because I didn't like my teacher. I am going back next Sunday).

"'If I could be a girl again,' a placid-looking lady said, 'I would never give up studying; I would never allow myself to lose the habit of learning things. Why, it is even hard for me now to learn a long Bible verse; I must choose a short one, or humiliatingly write it on a slip of paper to look at at the last minute.'

"'And if I were a girl again,' spoke up a lady with a quick tongue, 'I would never let myself speak of anybody's faults—no, not anybody's. You can't think how you get to see faults if you let your mind run on them.'

"Then a lady in the corner spoke sadly: 'If I could be a girl again, I'd begin by not being ashamed to be a Christian. I would take a stand and stand. You who never failed cannot think how it helps to have people know what to expect of you. By shilly-shally work you don't know what to expect of yourself.'

"'If I could be a girl again,' came from somebody, 'I would make myself write letters. To-day when I write one of my awkward letters—and I never do write a letter if anyone else will do it for me—I regret that I hated to write letters, and would never learn to make it easy. I always feel that I have lost something when I hear of people who have letter friends. My sister writes the happiest letters to twenty invalids; she is doing a "cup-of-cold-water" work in a way I never can.'

"'And I,' said a little woman, 'I would learn to sew. I am as awkward with my needle as though it were a hoe. And my needle makes as good work as a hoe would.'

"Everybody laughed, and then such a pretty woman said: 'If I could be a girl again, I think I would rather be a homely girl. I was pretty, and people told me so, and I was spoiled. I loved admiration better than bread and butter, and twice I lost promotion in school for having beaux and going to parties. Not but that a pretty girl can have good sense.'

"'If I were a girl again,' said an intellectual-looking lady, 'I would not give up everything for study; I would be a womanly and house-wifely girl as well as a student. And if I had one taste which dominated all the others, I wouldn't let all the others run to waste. I was deep in mathematics when I couldn't spell my own language as correctly as a girl of twelve. And my penmanship was disgraceful.'

"(I have given up geometry because I hate it, but I will begin again).

"'And I would try to make friends,' remarked a silent-looking lady. 'I forgot when I was a girl that I would need friends when I was older, and when I see women with their school friendships keeping them young, it makes my lonely heart ache.'

"'If I could be a girl again,' said somebody whose face I couldn't see. 'I would read only the best books.'

"'I would study and read the Bible more,' somebody said in reply. 'I would take it as real and alive, and meant for me, and grow up on it.'

"(I wish I could, I will ask somebody how to do it.)

"'And then quite a young lady said the sweetest thing: 'If I could be a girl again, I wouldn't grow old so fast. I would stay as fresh and young as I could, not live ahead of my age, but just be a girl-flower, and bloom as God gave sunshine and rain.'—Forward.

GIRL'S NAMES AND THEIR MEANING.

"A name! What's in a name?" And yet some way or other without intending, we seem to associate certain ideas with certain names. Margaret, I think of as sensible and dependable. Adelaide, as artificial and unreal. Alice, sweet and gentle. Mary, a good true home name. But then, these are only fancies, and some one else may associate quite different thoughts with the very same name.

We are now, however, giving the following names with their *real* significations:

- Ada, same as Edith, happiness.
- Adelaide, a princess.
- Agnes, chaste, pure.
- Alice, a princess.
- Amy, beloved.
- Ann, or Anne, grace.
- Barbara, foreign, strange.
- Beatrice, making happy.
- Bertha, bright, beautiful.
- Blanche, white.
- Bridget, strength.
- Caroline, noble-spirited.
- Catherine, or Katherine, pure.
- Charlotte, same as Caroline.
- Clara, bright, illustrious.
- Constance, firm, constant.
- Dora, or Dorothea, the gift of God.
- Elizabeth, worshipper of God.
- Emily, or Emma, energetic, industrious.
- Esther, a star, good fortune.
- Eva or Eve, life.
- Frances and Francis, free.
- Flora, flowers.
- Florence, blooming, flourishing.
- Grace, grace, favor.
- Hannah, grace.
- Helen, light.
- Isabella, worshipper of God.
- Jane, or Janet, the gift of God.
- aura, a laurel.
- Lilly, lily.
- Lucy, born at break of day.
- Martha, the ruler of the house.
- Mary, bitter.
- Matilda, or Maud, heroine.
- Nora, or Honora, honorable.
- Olive, or Olivia, an olive.
- Phoebe, pure, radiant.
- Rachel, a ewe.
- Rebecca, of enchanting beauty.
- Ruth, beauty.
- Sara, or Sarah, a princess.
- Susan, or Susanna, a lily.
- Winifred, a lover of peace.

STRAY BITS.

"Since I cannot govern my tongue, though within my teeth, how can I hope to govern the tongues of others."—Franklin.

"Millions of slate pencils are used yearly in schools of all kinds, and if all the school slates were taken for roofing they would roof a large city."—Ex.

"The earth is thirty-two times larger than the moon. Nearly two-thirds of all the letters carried by the postal service of the world are written, sent to, and read by English-speaking people."

The report of the mission to lepers states that in India alone there are 100,000 lepers; in Japan, 200,000, and in China probably 300,000.

THE WISHING BRIDGE.

Among the legends sung or said  
Along our rocky shore,  
The Wishing Bridge of Marblehead  
May well be sung once more.

An hundred years ago (so ran  
The old-time story) all  
Good wishes said above its span  
Would, soon or late, befall.

If pure and earnest, never failed  
The prayers of man or maid  
For him who on the deep sea sailed,  
For her at home who stayed.

Once thither came two girls from school,  
And wished in childish glee;  
And one would be a queen and rule,  
And one the world would see.

Time passed; with change of hopes and ears  
And in the self-same place,  
Two women, grey with middle years,  
Stood, wondering, face to face.

With wakened memories, as they met,  
They queried what had been:  
"A poor man's wife am I, and yet."  
Said one, "I am a queen.

"My realm a little homestead is,  
Where, lacking crown and throne,  
I rule by loving services  
And patient toil alone."

The other said: "The great world lies  
Beyond me as it laid;  
O'er love's and duty's boundaries  
My feet have never strayed.

"I see but common sights of home,  
Its common sounds I hear;  
My widowed mother's sick-bed room  
Sufficeth for my sphere.

"I read to her some pleasant page  
Of travel far and wide,  
And in a dreamy pilgrimage  
We wander side by side.

"And when, at last, she falls asleep,  
My book becomes to me  
A magic glass; my watch I keep,  
But all the world I see.

"A farm-wife queen your place you fill,  
While fancy's privilege  
Is mine to walk the earth at will,  
Thanks to the Wishing Bridge."

"Nay, leave the legend for the truth."  
The other cried, "and say  
God gives the wishes of our youth,  
But in His own best way."  
—From Whittier's Poems.

GOSSIP.

"Though never so clear, a matter appear,  
I'll never believe, unless I receive,  
Full proof, full as clear, as matters appear."

"A servant with this clause,  
Makes drudgery divine,  
Who sweeps the room as for Thy laws,  
Makes that, and the action, fine."

—George Herbert.

Boys for Farm Help

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