

Children's Department.

FOR HIS SAKE.

Yes, there could be no doubt about it! It was just the very prettiest blue kerchief that ever was made to deck a little maiden's head, or at least Elsa Richter thought so, as she passed the shop window, and walked slowly down the main street of the little town, casting over her shoulder longing eyes at the tempting article.

"And mine is such a shabby old thing," she sighed, and taking up one end that was tied under her chin, and looking at its frayed and faded edges. "But mother can't afford to get me another this summer, so it is no good thinking about it." And Elsa resolutely set her face homeward, and tried to forget that lovely blue ground, with its border of delicate rosebuds.

"What ails my child? What troubles thee!" said good Frau Richter as the girl entered the cottage.

"Nothing but silliness, mother dear," replied Elsa smiling. "I am only like the little boy of whom thou hast told me, that cried for the moon."

"And thy moon is —?"

"Nought but a pretty blue kerchief, mother, that hangs in the draper's window in the town. But there! I know very well I cannot have it, and I won't wish for it any more."

Frau Richter looked thoughtful for a minute; presently she said:

"It does seem hard, my dear little girl, when thou hast so few pleasures and no pretty things as other children have, that I cannot purchase for thee this kerchief; but Elsa, I think I can tell thee how thou mayest perhaps get it for thyself."

"Really, mother?" cried Elsa.

"Yes, I had a visit to-day from the good doctor's lady, and she came, she said, to ask if I could put her in the way of procuring a quantity of wild strawberries, to make a particular kind of conserve, as this was just the time for procuring the fruit."

"And thou saidst, mother dear?"

"And I said, *kindchen*, that my little girl could, I thought, supply what was required, as she knew all the places where the fruit was to be found; and then the lady was well pleased, and promised a fair price for all that should be brought her. So that after all, Elsa, thou mayst be able to earn the money and buy the kerchief."

It was natural enough that Elsa should be pleased. And the next morning, very early, she started off with a large basket slung at her back to a place several miles away, where upon sunny southern slopes and woody knolls grew a profusion of the beautiful red fruit.

She had taken some bread and salt herring with her, and a bottle of milk and water, so there was no

need to return home for dinner. And she searched and picked all day, only allowing herself about half an hour's rest at twelve o'clock. By the time the sun set she had filled her basket, and was so tired that she was glad to make the best of her way home.

No one will blame the child for thinking of the pretty blue kerchief as she trotted wearily down towards the town, in the neighborhood of which her mother's cottage stood. She reckoned that she had picked about seven pounds of strawberries, and these, if paid for at the usual rate, would just give her money enough for the purchase.

She was only a few minutes' walk from home, when she met little Annie Meyers sallying forth all alone, with a basket on her arm.

"Whither goest thou, little one?" asked Elsa. "How is thy mother? I heard she was not so well yesterday."

"My mother is very poorly," replied Annette, with a look of care and sorrow strange in so young a face; "and this evening, after eating nothing all day, she began to long for wild strawberries, and so, since father was at home to take care of her, I took my basket, and came out to see if I could find a few in Rollo's field. It is too late to go to the wood for them."

"Yes, indeed," rejoined Elsa; "but you won't find any in the field. They were picked long ago."

"Then I know not what to do!" said the child, half crying. "Poor mother wants them so, and it seems hard to go back without."

Elsa did not answer at once, because a great struggle was going on in her mind. She had only just fruit enough in her basket to pay, when sold, for that pretty kerchief, and if she gave Annette some of the berries, she must make up her mind to go without the coveted treasure.

But Elsa was not a selfish child. Her mother's teachings had not been in vain, nor the lessons that God Himself had taught her in the holy book that she loved so well, and by the working of His Spirit in her young heart. And now she thought, "If I give up what I wanted, and do it for Christ's sake, He will see that I love Him, and am trying to be His disciple."

At that moment the draper's window seemed almost to pass before her eyes, and the blue kerchief with its rosebud border to gleam out with all the added glow which imagination could give. But she put the temptation steadily from her, and patting poor little Annette's troubled face gently, she said, "Fret not thyself, dear; I have some fine ripe strawberries here, and thy mother shall have all she can eat. Give me thy basket," and, much to the little girl's delight, Elsa filled the small basket from her large one, and the two children walked towards home together.

The money that Elsa received for the fruit she had gathered was not enough to pay for the pretty

kerchief, so she did not get it after all. But somehow she grew to be quite fond of her old faded head-gear, and proud of it too; for when she looked at the washed-out pattern and frayed corners, she felt her heart warm towards the Saviour, for the love of whom she had "done what she could," and she said to herself, "It isn't a great deal to do for Jesus, who did so much for me; but I think He sees that I love Him, and that I wear this old kerchief for His sake."

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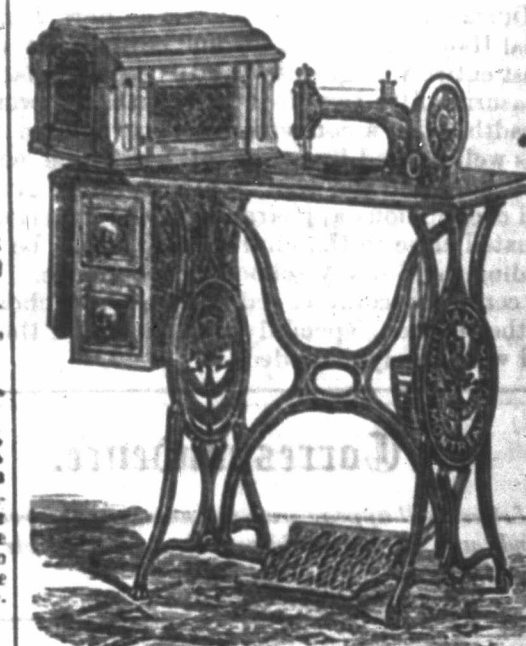
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