

back, 'Oh, but you shall have it, anyway.'

It did cost Amy a pang, but she conquered it nobly. 'You like this one best,' she said gently, then she took it unflinchingly from off the table and put it into Emmie's hands. As she did so, like a flash, the golden text of her next week's Sunday school lesson came into her head, and she repeated it slowly to herself. 'And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.' Ah, well, and she had not only given the cold water, but the cup with it, and surely God would bless her. And so it was with a sweet feeling of satisfaction in her unselfish little heart, that she moved grandma's cup into the vacant place left among her treasures.

Emmie's eyes danced as she beheld her gift. 'Oh, thank you,' she said ecstatically, 'I'll keep it always to remember you by, though, of course, I couldn't even forget you, but are you sure, really sure, you want me to have it?'

Amy nodded and Emmie turned to her mother with a rapt look. 'Mother, mother, I got a birthday present, anyway, didn't I?' she said in such a jubilant voice that her mother, for the first time, realized how much Emmie had felt the omission.

Away out in the prairies there stood a little house. A light twinkled cheerily in the window, for it was long since dark. In one corner of the kitchen the table stood ready for the evening meal. It was spread with a red table cloth, the plates were of heavy white ware, and the forks were three pronged with black handles. For supper, there were fried potatoes, brown bread and white, a glass dish of wild raspberry jam, and two pitchers, one of milk, the other of buttermilk. There were three plates laid, and by one of them stood a certain little gold banded cup adorned with delicate blue flowers, the only thing of beauty there.

By and by, for I am sure you can guess whose home I am describing, Emmie's father came in, and then the evening meal, so long delayed, began. He was a tall man with a browned tanned face and keen eyes that were liable at times to look a little stern, but he was evidently in a genial mood to-night.

'Well, mother,' he began, after the plates were helped, 'I'm afraid you've had a hard time of it to-day, you and Emmie. It's been so terribly hot.'

'Ask Emmie about it,' said his wife smiling a little; 'I guess she isn't going to complain.'

Emmie laughed and passed the blue and gold cup to her father. 'Some buttermilk, please,' she said.

Her father took up the pitcher and started at the vision of the delicate flower encircled cup confronting him.

'Why,' he said, in an amazed voice, 'where did you get this, Emmie? It's a regular little beauty of a cup, I declare.'

'It's my birthday present,' answered Emmie gayly. 'A little girl named Amy Dorrance, gave it to me, and, oh, father, she was the nicest little girl, I just love her—yes, I do, and she lives in the beautifullest home, with pictures and rugs and everything. She had ten cups and saucers on a little table,' went on Emmie somewhat incoherently, 'and she let me take my pick of 'em, yes, she did, because it was my birthday and I didn't get any present.'

Farmer Dare looked across at his wife. 'It was the place where we stopped to-day,' she explained in a low voice, 'the place where I told you they were so kind to us.'

'Oh,' he said, then he glanced again at his little daughter. 'She let you take your pick, did she?' he said in a queer voice, 'and it's your birthday, is it?'

'Yes, sir,' replied Emmie, in a subdued voice, not knowing whether he were pleased or not.

Her father looked at her again, and his keen gaze softened. He took the dainty gift in his rough, hard hand, and, then, suddenly, a hot tear blurred his eyes. The words on the little cup all ran together and were lost. To think it had been his little Emmie's birthday, and he had given her nothing, and she was his only one. He sat the little cup hastily down. The little golden letters stared at him with their accusing words as if they were Emmie herself. 'Think of me—think of me,' they seemed to say, and he had not thought of her.

'Come here, Emmie,' he said.

Emmie rose and went shyly over to his side. Her father drew her

down upon his knee and smoothed her hair with his rough hand.

'Don't be afraid of me, child,' he said, and then Emmie hid her face against his shoulder.

'So the little city girl gave you a present, did she?' he went on a trifle huskily, 'and your own father forgot you. Well, she shan't lose anything by it. I'll take her a jar of honey for this kind act, and some of Daisy's best butter the very next time I go to town, and thank her in to the bargain; there ain't many little girls that would have done it, and you just see if you ever go without a birthday present again. Those three little words on that cup reminded me of a good deal I had forgotten. They remind me that I've got the best and dearest and most unselfish little girl in the world, and that I didn't know it.'

He drew his shirt sleeve suddenly across his eyes while Emmie kissed him softly. The unwonted pressure of his child's sweet lips against his brown cheek, moved him strangely.

'Never mind, Emmie,' he said, drawing her closer, 'never mind. Father'll do better by you—yes, and by mother, too. I never took much stock in holidays or birthdays, but somehow this little cup has set me to thinking. 'All work and no play' won't do, it won't do, Emmie.'

Mother had tears in her eyes, too, but there was a new hope in her heart as she listened to these unexpected words.

Both parents looked at Emmie as she took up the little cup. The blue flowers in the lamp light looked bluer than ever, and the shining letters glistened with a golden lustre. Emmie laid the little cup gently against her cheek. 'Oh,' she said blissfully, 'I wonder if Amy really knows how happy she has made me.'

Perhaps Amy did know. At any rate the Recording Angel knew and could testify in the last day when the great book is opened, of how well the little birthday cup had fulfilled its sweet and loving mission.

(The End.)

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