

God's Plans

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"God's plans, like lilies, pure and white, unfold."

"I'S just my luck; I might as well give up."

"Give what up, Mildred?" asked her mother, looking up from her sewing at the discontented face of her young daughter.

"Give up trying to get a position; what is the good of my University education? It is nearly a year since I graduated and I haven't earned one cent. You know I have answered every advertisement in the daily papers for teachers, governesses, and companions, and what have I got? Nothing, and wasted postage into the bargain. I thought, when I answered that advertisement in last week's *Review*, for a position as governess for two children, there might be some hope for me. But no, the winds of fate blow ever and ever blow amiss." To-day I received a letter from Edith Vernon, one of the girls of our graduating class, informing me that she had received a position as governess for two children of a wealthy American lady and was getting ready to go with them to spend the winter in Italy. And just think, mother, that was the very position for which I applied, and Edith got it. She didn't take any better standing at college than I, and yet she is going to get \$600 a year, and have all her expenses paid while travelling in Europe. It is too bad, but of course, it's my luck. Everything goes wrong; and poor Mildred burst into tears.

Mrs. Keith looked sorrowful and put her arms around her young daughter, trying to soothe her with words of comfort.

"You know, darling, a year's rest after your hard study is just what you need; some day the winds of fate will blow for you, but not amiss. Take it on trust, a little while and some day you will see that 'God's plans are always best.' However, we are not anxious to get rid of you, Mildred, and surely you are not so anxious to leave us?"

"O, no! mother, it isn't that; you know I love you all; but it seems a shame that after spending so much time, money, and energy, on my education I can do nothing but stay at home and keep house. Anyone can do that. Why, there is Mrs. Winston's servant who was never at school a day in her life and who is a better housekeeper than she? And yet I have to spend sixteen years of my life at hard study, and then settle down to the same kind of work that Bridget does. Of all the girls of our graduating class I believe I have the worst luck. There is Ethel Carmen—she has gone to Japan to be a missionary. She always took an active part in all the missionary meetings at Victoria; Kathleen is teaching Literature and History to the 'best pupils that ever lived'; Eunice, Bessie, Helen and Vera, are taking a post-graduate course at Vassar College; Grace has a position as companion to an invalid lady and gets \$500 a year; Edith is going to start for Rome next week and I—well, I am washing dishes, getting meals, sweeping and dusting—work I could have done without any education."

"Yes, Mildred, perhaps you could; but a knowledge of letters, of mathematics and classics ought not to disqualify you for the exercise of household economy. You ought to be a better housekeeper because your thoughts do not run in a narrow road. Commonplace everyday duties are not incompatible with the use of any natural talent or acquired accomplishment, and a girl can have just as refined, elevated thoughts while engaged, in washing dishes as in reading Cicero's orations, Moliere's comedies or Shakespeare's plays. Your ideas need not be so narrowed down that they cannot rise above your homely occupations."

"O, mother! you do not understand me. I do not object to housework—in fact, I enjoy it very much; but there is no money in it, and you know how much we need the 'filthy lucre.' If father were rich, there would be less need of my securing a position; but when there is so much to get and so little to get with, I think it is about time to show a little honest independence of spirit and get to work to help the family. I do not want to be a vine always clinging to someone else. That idea is exceedingly pretty and poetical, but too tame to suit me. My creed is not contained in the sentiment of the 'Lotus Eaters.' I have no desire for 'long rest or death, dark death or dreamful ease.' I want 'something ere the end, some work of noble note.'"

"Such as teaching little children," added her sister Gladys, who had just come in from giving a music lesson. I wish you could take my place; it's such stupid work teaching children. This



"AND THE GERMANS AGREE WITH HER."

afternoon, I was playing one of Beethoven's sonatas for Dell Vincent, when an Italian came along with his hurdy-gurdy, and didn't that little mild beg me to stop playing while she ran to the window to listen to that 'perfectly lovely music.' She wished she could have that kind of music to practise instead of Bach's fugues, Beethoven's sonatas, and all that other stuff by Mendelssohn, Chopin and Schumann. There is no accounting for some people's tastes. But say, Mildred, what have we for tea? I am ravenously hungry, so run along like a good girl and let us see what a fine supper Miss Mildred Keith, B.A., can prepare; and the younger sister curled herself up in an arm-chair, while Mildred went to the kitchen to prepare the evening meal.

"Well, I can bake, anyhow," said Mildred to herself as she took a pan of flaky biscuits from the oven, "and I can be a governess or a companion, too, when I get the chance. In the meantime, I will be happy where God has placed me, and since Epictetus has said, 'We do not choose our own paths in life, our simple

duty is confined to playing them well,' I will take care that my part is well played, even if it is washing pots and pans. Some day I may get a position as governess or companion, and go to Italy, too."

But the days passed by into weeks and months, and Mildred and Kathleen still washed pots and pans and assisted with other household work. Several times word had come to her from Edith telling about the wonderful experiences in Italy. In the last letter she had stated that they were preparing to sail for Spain, where they would spend a few weeks before going to France and Germany. As she read this, something like a murmur escaped from her lips and one tear after another trickled down her flushed face. Yes, 'the winds of fate blow ever,' but for her 'they ever blow amiss.' There was no doubt a girl that ever lived. There seemed to be nothing for her to do but to stay at home and be a vine. Now if she had a position like Edith or Kathleen she would—

"Do something wonderful," said Gladys, who had slipped into the room and overheard. "Well, now is your chance. I have just had a letter from Ruby Sinclair. She says her sister is ill and has to take a year's rest, and she wondered if you would take Ida's school in Saskatchewan. There are twenty pupils, most of them Germans, and the salary is \$700. Will you go?"

"Of course, I will, and gladly," said Mildred, almost crying for joy. At last she had a chance to teach. She remembered how often, when a child, she had put rows of bricks against the wall and played school with these red pupils, and now she was going to teach real live children. O, how happy she was!

Mildred had entered upon her new duties as teacher in W—— School. How she enjoyed her work, and how she loved her pupils! When the little blue-eyed Germans slipped their chubby hands into hers and murmured "Meine Lehrerin," it seemed as if God were giving her a glimpse of heaven. What a beautiful world it was, after all!

And so the days passed by, each one drawing teacher and pupils closer together and nearer to God. Life took on a richer, a deeper, a fuller meaning to Mildred. When Little Kathie's big sister Sudurog was married, the wedding was not complete without the teacher. When baby Julius was christened, "die Lehrerin" had to be present at the ceremony, and when golden-haired Aurelia was laid to rest in the little Lutheran graveyard, it was "die Lehrerin" who put her arms around the grief-stricken mother and murmured, "Let not your heart be troubled."

Last week I received a letter from her sister Gladys, and this part interested me very much. "Mildred is still teaching the little Germans during the day and their parents in the evenings. The first year among them, and she is as happy as a lark. She says she believes she is the happiest girl of all the graduating class and would not change places with any one of them—not even Edith Vernon, whose happy lot she envied four years ago. Now she knows that everything has turned out for the best, and the Germans agree with her."