

"And what would the poor mother bird think?"

"Oh, there'll be two left, and she'll never know the difference. And the nest was so full before, mother, that I don't see how in the world she could keep all of them warm. Maybe she'd be glad if I would take some of them away."

Just then the door-bell rang, and mother did not have time to talk any more with her little son. Billy took the two birds he had up to his room, and when he came back Aunt Kate was there.

"And how's Billy boy?" she said.

"Fine," said Billy.

"And are you going home with me this time?"

"I don't think mother could spare me."

"Oh, she has Fred and Gretna left and she'll never miss you, and the house is so crowded, maybe she would be glad if I should take you away."

Now don't you think it was very, very strange that Aunt Kate said almost the same words about Billy's mother as he had said about the little birds' mother?

Billy didn't say another word, but I can tell you what he did. He went right up to his room and he got those little birds, and then he ran down the walk to the bush, just as fast as his little feet could patter, and he put those birds back into the nest, and you should have seen how happy that mother bird looked.

And now I'll tell you a secret, if you'll never tell Billy that I told you. When he came back again to his room he knelt down by the bed and whispered:—

"Please, dear God, if you will forgive me for taking those birds this time, I do not think I shall ever want to take any more little birds away from their mothers, and I'll try not to let any other boys do it, either, if I can stop them."—Olive Plants.

BEHIND THE COUNTER

"I am sorry to have taken so much of your time," the customer said, pleasantly, "but samples are necessary sometimes. I will take these to my dressmaker at once and mail my order to-morrow."

Lois Bently hesitated a moment, but a glimpse of Fanny Oliver's sales slip, ostentatiously displayed, nerved her to courage.

"I don't mind the time ever," she said, "but you see somebody is to be laid off for the summer, and I have to work. But the samples have my number and the sales will be credited to me."

"You deserve it, certainly," the lady answered. "I hope your next customer will be quicker than I have been." She turned away with a friendly good-bye smile, leaving Lois half-encouraged, half-hopeless. There was not much question among the girls that Lois would be the one to go; she seemed fated to have those who wanted cheap laces come to her, whereas Fanny Oliver always captured the big purchasers. Fanny said it was part of business to know which customers to go to, and that Lois had not a business bump.

"But somebody has to wait upon them," Lois argued.

"Doubtless, but it can be somebody else," Fanny retorted, lightly. "You see the difference it makes. Your sales to-day have been thirty-nine dollars and mine one hundred and sixty-three dollars."

Yes, it was easy to see the difference, and Lois, summoned to the manager's office the next day, told herself she had known it all the time; what she had not realized was that until then she had not quite given up hope.

The manager looked up pleasantly. "I called you up, Miss Bently, to show you a letter we received from a customer this morning. I think it may interest you."

Lois, bewildered, took the letter. At first the phrases meant nothing to her, so sure had she been of dismissal; but after a little she began to understand—"the very patient and courteous young lady who waited upon me," "not the first time I had noticed her unflinching patience, even with the most trying customer"—the words looked at her like friendly, assuring faces.

"I merely wish to add, Miss Bently," the manager said, as she handed back the letter, "that the kind of saleswoman noted in this letter is the kind we never part with if we can help it."

Suppose—she had not written! Lois did not realize that she had said it aloud until she heard the manager answering her thought.

"Yes, we might have made a mistake, although we are not so likely as you think. But even then, the same qualities would have won in the end. They always do, Miss Bently."

Lois, shining-eyed and pink-cheeked, went back to the lace counter. It was good—best of all—to know that real things counted. But how other people helped—if they would!

WHEN BABY WAS LOST

By Frances Margaret Fox.

No one knew that Baby was lost until she found it out herself and cried.

It happened this way: Baby and her Mother were visiting Grandpa and Grandma and Uncle Jim on the farm. Every morning at ten o'clock Mother gave Baby a glass of milk. Then she took off the darling's shoes and stockings and put her to bed in the spare bedroom. The spare bedroom opened off the parlour and the parlour had an outside door.

Baby was always so sleepy at ten o'clock that her eyes closed almost the minute her curly head touched the pillow.

One morning, instead of sleeping two hours, Baby awoke in fifteen minutes. For a little while, she gazed around the darkened room—at the roses on the wall and cologne bottles on the old-fashioned bureau. Then she turned over, with her face down, and squirmed her plump little body to the edge of the bed. Down she slid, until, with a soft little bump, she

reached the braided rug on the floor. Baby wasn't hurt a bit, because her head didn't bump.

The outside parlour door, leading to the porch, was wide open, and the screen wasn't hooked. Mother and Grandma were working in the kitchen, doing the churning and the baking and washing dishes, so they didn't know when Baby pushed the screen door open and escaped into the summer sunshine.

Baby was afraid of the big, shaggy dog, whose name was Shep; but Shep was nowhere in sight. A hummingbird came to sip honey from the honeysuckle by the porch. Baby tried to catch him. A bright-winged butterfly flew low over the pansy-bed beside the steps. Forgetting the hummingbird, Baby tried to catch the butterfly. She followed him through the gate and a little way down the long, long lane, before he was lost in the sunshine.

Next the barefooted baby went padding through the dust, with hands outstretched behind a toad; but, after hopping along ahead of her a few steps, that wise little toad hid behind a stone while Baby travelled by.

She was singing "Da-da-da-da" as loud as ever you please, when a robin on the fence turned his head on one side and called, "Cheer up! Cheer up!" Baby tried to catch the robin, but he flew a wee bit ahead of her, until they passed the barn, where doves were cooing, "Cook-cook-cook-co-coo-o-o-o!" "Cook-cook-coo oo-oo!"

Back of the barn was the orchard, and in the orchard were squirrels and birds and bees and butterflies and grasshoppers and crickets and at least one little squirmy-wormy!

Baby had a beautiful time in the orchard, until she thought of her Mother and her Grandma in the farmhouse kitchen. At first Baby felt lonely; then she was scared, and then she began to cry. You see, the dear Baby was lost. She didn't know the way home. She couldn't see the barn; she couldn't see anything but apple-trees.

Baby was standing still in the middle of the orchard, crying and crying and crying, when Shep found her—that big, shaggy, good old dog, Shep! He came bounding across the orchard when he saw Baby, and stuck his friendly nose in her face.

"Don't cry, Baby, don't cry!" he said in dog talk. But the Baby didn't understand, and cried louder than ever.

"Come with me, I'll take you home!" "Come with me, I'll take you home!" urged the dog in big dog talk; but the Baby only cried and cried, because all she heard was "Bow-wow! Bow-wow-wow-wow!" She never did like to have Shep prance around on his four big feet and say "Bow-wow!" like that!

Soon Shep ran away fast as he could go. He couldn't make the Baby understand that he knew how to lead her home, so he ran for Uncle Jim—good old dog, Shep!

Uncle Jim was in the barn at work when Shep came running in, calling loud, "Come! Come! Come! Come!" Uncle Jim understood what Shep said, because he was so well acquainted with the old fellow.

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When Shep began pulling Uncle Jim by the trousers, only stopping to say, "Come! Come! Come!" Uncle Jim stopped his work and went with the dog.

Straight to the orchard ran good old Shep, with Uncle Jim close behind.

The Baby was glad to see Uncle Jim. She ran to meet him and put her arms tight around his neck; and those two, with old Shep, went skipping through the orchard to the house.

When they reached the farmhouse, Baby was laughing and old dog Shep was jumping around and barking, as if he never was so happy in his life before.

When Mother and Grandma heard the story, they patted Shep on the head, and said: "Good old Shep! Good old dog!"

At noon that day, Uncle Jim gave Shep a piece of beefsteak for his dinner, and Baby said: "Good dog!"

That old dog was so pleased he wagged and wagged his tail. Ever after when Baby went to walk, old dog Shep went, too.—New York Churchman.

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