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Well Served.

BY SALLY CAMPBELL.

Grandmother and Janet Holt were alone together in the sitting room.

"I hate the days when you and father and mother go away and leave me to take care of things," said Janet. "Everything always goes wrong. I wish tomorrow was over!"

"It soon will be," said grandmother, but she did not try to contradict the statement that things went wrong when Janet was left in charge, as Janet half expected that she would.

"I do my best," said Janet, with a touch of injured pride in her voice. "I'm the oldest and I have the responsibility. I can't let the children pull the house down or kill themselves. I've got to keep them alive until you get back, and it takes all my wits to accomplish it. If feelings and tempers get hurt in the process, I can't help it. And they do, always; mother is sure to find all those that aren't fighting, weeping."

Janet laughed, but she did not do it with her whole heart.

"Do you remember," asked grandmother, suddenly, "what you told me about that nice cold lunch that you gave us, the other day?"

"No," said Janet, slowly, trying to think. "I've forgotten. Did I say anything in particular?"

"You said that it was not so much of a lunch, really, for every one of the dishes was very simple; and then you said, 'It all depends upon how things are served.'"

"Did I?" asked Janet, rather blankly. She wondered what grandmother meant.

"I thought at the time how true it was of so many things besides lunches."

Janet began to understand.

"As you say," grandmother went on, "you are the oldest and must take the care of things. You feel responsible. But you are not much the oldest, you know, and it is hard for the others to feel obliged to obey you. I hardly think, if I were you, that I would make it a matter of authority, unless I were driven to it. Serve your decisions with a nice little garnish of tact and good fellowship, and see whether things will not go better."

"Well, I suppose I might try it," said Janet, with the resigned air of one who considered herself unfairly censured. Then she changed the subject.

But Janet was sensible, and, more than that, she wished to do right. So, though she was inclined to resent grandmother's gently spoken appeal, the more she thought about it, the more she saw the situation as it was.

"Maybe I do order to much," she confessed, at last. "Maybe I shouldn't like it any better than they do, if I were the children. Anyway, I promised grandmother to try peace measures, and I will."

Next morning, while Janet was dressing, she was busily planning "the days' campaign," as she called it. "If we can get through without at least one general bloody engagement and lots of guerrilla warfare between whiles, why, then a full account ought to be typewritten and laid up in the archives."

She laughed and afterwards grew grave.

"Is everything written, I wonder, always, and laid up in the books that are to be opened?"

She did not answer the question. She slipped down on her knees by her bed and prayed her morning prayers, with a petition in them for "help to make that day better than the other days had been."

For about an hour after the heads of the house had gone, things went smoothly. Then Fritz came running in, exclaiming, "There's been a big freight wreck; nobody killed, but lots of stuff scattered everywhere and trains smashed up. It's down the road a mile beyond Scot's Crossing. I'm going on my wheel to see it."

Janet was on the point of saying, "You are not going to do anything of the sort. You know father told you oughtn't to have gone to the last one by yourself." But she remembered in time and said instead: "Do you think father would like you to go alone? Can't you get some of the men to take you with them?"

Fritz had been bristling with arguments when he came in. He was going. "I don't care what she says," but then he had not counted on her saying anything like this. It took him right off his guard and made him hesitate.

"Look," said Janet, who was now staring down the road with her hand over her eyes to keep the sun out of them. "Isn't that Mr. Harper's team? Run, stop him and see whether he isn't going to the wreck. Maybe he has an empty seat."

Fritz scudded toward the gate without another word. Janet saw the reins pulled in and the big horses came to a standstill. A moment later Fritz was clambering over the wheel, and off they went in a cloud of dust, with a parting wave of a cap in Janet's direction.

The older sister turned back to the house with a breath of relief.

"Fritz is off my mind now for hours, if not for the whole day. It was so easy and simple—and sensible, too. But what's the matter indoors?"

Very loud and very angry voices were heard from the bay window in the dining room. Polly and Prue, the twins, approaching a state of collision. Formerly on such occasions Janet had offered arbitration, but the twins were too modern themselves to have much patience with that method of modern times.

"To-day I'll offer gingerbread," she said to herself, as she hastened to the scene of conflict. Then, standing in the doorway, she proclaimed aloud: "There are two nice, hot, spicy, puffy ginger cakes just out of the oven. Polly may have one and Prue may have the other just as soon as they make up. I put cakes only to non-combatants."

The twins did not understand the last word, but they understood clearly what went before. They looked at each other in doubt, at first; then a tiny twinkle showed in Prue's eyes and a funny little dimple came in Polly's cheek.

They got the gingerbread and began to lay plans for a monster banquet, to which all the dolls on both sides of the bay window were cordially invited.

When Frank and Joe came in at dinner time and found Fritz absent at the wreck they were inconsolable. Janet was very sympathetic.

"But Fritz is the oldest," she said, and you know father didn't like it when he went to the last wreck. Perhaps it will not all be gone to-morrow; and you can see it then."

They recognized that she was right, and they must not go, but they were very sulky and cross over it, and relieved their feelings at last by beginning to tease the little girls.

"I believe everything's going to be spoiled, after all," said Janet to herself. "What shall I do with them? My own temper is weakening; I am but waiting for the last straw. The day must be saved at once or end in storm."

"Boys," she said suddenly, "I know you want to see the wreck dreadfully, and I wish you could. I'd like to go to it myself, but we can't. So let's bandage up our woes together and play croquet and try to forget that life is a desert."

This was a generous offer from Janet; she hated croquet. Her small brothers knew it and realized that her sympathy was real. Half-ashamed of themselves, they left off tormenting the twins, and after playing their favorite game for an hour very gallantly gave Janet an honorable discharge. When evening came bringing with it the absent members of the household, Mrs. Holt's first question, but rather anxiously, was, "Well, daughter, how has everything gone?"

"Beautifully, mother dear," answered Janet, blithely. "The gates of the Temple of Janus have been closed all day. They did get on a crack once or twice, but it didn't last."

Mrs. Holt laughed and patted her cheek, with a look of relief which gave Janet a feeling half of pleasure, half of pain.

"Poor mother, she was afraid to come home," she thought. "I am so glad I took grandmother's advice."

"Grandmother," she said in the course of the evening, making moral garnishes and oil dressing is a very time consuming occupation. I left undone a lot of things I meant to do today and worked hard, and all I have to show for it is simply that we didn't scratch and fight, as is our nature to."

"That is a great deal, I should say," responded grandmother.

"Yes'm; but it left out every stitch on my new shirt waist and most of the reading which I contemplated. 'A heart at leisure from itself to soothe and sympathize' is like the rest of the leisure classes—it takes a immense amount of keeping up—"

"So it does, child," said grandmother, solemnly. "It takes better keeping than you or I can give it."

Janet was silent a moment. Then she laid her fresh young face against the wrinkled old one. "It makes the dear people who have it," she said, "very lovely and pleasant in their life, as I have reason to know—which is better than any other 'recommendation,' I guess in all this wide world."

—Ex.

The Stray-Sunbeam Gatherers.

BY WILLIAMETTA A. PRESTON.

"Let's gather up the sunbeams," said Effie Lloyd, as she worked among her flowers.

"You'd better, they get so dreadfully scattered. Some folks has more'n their share, like your posies there, and some don't get any."

Effie looked up in surprise. She had thought she was all alone, but there stood an old woman in a rusty black gown and bonnet, with a large bundle in her arms. Her face was scarred and wrinkled, but she had a kindly smile.

"Won't you sit down here in the shade and rest?" asked Effie, politely pulling forward a garden chair. Then she ran into the house, returning in a minute with a glass of rich, creamy milk. "Maybe you'd like that," she said, timidly.

"Thank you kindly," said the old woman, drinking it eagerly. "That's a stray sunbeam that you found and gave me. Do you see what I mean? I haven't tasted food today." "Come in, and mamma will give you lots," said Effie, eagerly.

"In a minute, dearie, I want to tell you about the sunbeams. When I was a little girl, mother used to tell me that anything I wanted and couldn't have was a sunbeam gone astray. So whenever one strayed from me, I was to hunt up one for somebody else, and perhaps somebody would find mine and bring it back to me. It made it lots easier to bear disappointments to think that they were only stray sunbeams, and all my life I've done the little I could to send back those I've seen going astray. Now you look like a veritable sunshine gatherer, and when I heard you sing 'Gather up the sunbeams,' I thought of mother and the stray ones. Now I'll go and see your mother. I used to know her years ago."

Effie had a new thought. It took shape presently, when Sadie Bell came over to play with her.

"Sadie lets have a new society."

"What kind?" asked Sadie eagerly.

"Let's be sunshine gatherers." And Effie told her friend what the old woman had said. "Let's gather up the stray sunbeams, and give them to somebody in the shadow."

That was a new idea, and Sadie agreed at once.

"Will it be just you and I or shall we ask the rest of the girls to join us?" she asked.

"Let's have Helen and May and Gracie, that will be five of us. We won't tell anybody what we were doing either. Then they'll be surprised."

"Oh!" a secret society. Goodie! goodie! and Sadie ran off after the other girls and then and there the sunbeam gatherers were organized.

The rule of the society was for each member to find one sunbeam a day and set it straight.

"There's Mrs. Norcross,—her little Arthur just died. We could take her flowers," said Helen. "They used to have such lovely ones when they lived on the hill and now she hasn't any garden at all."

"And there's little blind Joe. We could read to him," added Grace.

"And Grannie Lang likes us to come in, and hold her yarn, and listen while she talks," said May.

And little Francis could go out every day if we'd push her wheeled chair."

Finally the pastor began to notice that the little girls were very busy, so he asked Effie about it one day. He was pleased and asked if they were working together.

So Effie told him of the old woman's stray sunbeams and how they had become sunbeam gatherers.

"But there are so many gone astray that we can't begin to set them straight," she said.

"I know her," said the pastor. "She has had a hard life, but she is always looking for sunbeams, as she said. Now let's see if we can't find more sunshine gatherers."

That night at prayer meeting he told his people about the sunshine gatherers and how there were too many gone astray for them to look after all, and he asked for volunteers to help in the work.

Eagerly all responded. It didn't require organized work it wouldn't interfere with the other societies. It was just individual work, just gathering up the stray sunbeams. But what a difference it makes in many lives!—Sunday School Times.

Princess Brigitta's Prize.

On the day that the Princess Brigitta's prize was to be awarded, little Cordula went to school with a sad heart. She had so often wanted to win that prize. Sibylla and Franze and Helene and all the other girls had been working on their bits of embroidery and fine stitching these many weeks; but poor little Cordula had been forced to cook the food and brush the rooms and keep the baby happy, because the good mother had been ill. The pretty piece to the little girl who could begin was lying, with only the few dainty stitches in it, just as she had left it when the mother's strength had given out.

The Beautiful Princess Brigitta was a fine needle-woman, and she had offered the prize of a gold piece to the little girl who could present the best specimen of her own needle-work. Now the day had come on which the work was to be exhibited and the prize awarded.

Each little girl brought forth her work when she was called and laid it on a small table beside the princess. When Cordula's turn, there were tears in her blue eyes, as she told her reason of her empty hands.

"But, dear child," replied the princess, "thou sayest that the mother is better. Hast thou had no time, then, for some little piece of sewing?"

"Indeed, I have not!" the little girl said earnestly. "Now that mother is able to cook and sweep, I have had to mend stockings all the time I am not at school, for the five