

They waited a good long time. The customer took no heed.

"Elsie," at last cried Chubbie, "you must come again, you know."

"Come again," bawled Puff. "You haven't bought lollipops yet."

An impatient "Bother!" and the book was flung aside. With a frown on her brow, Elsie purchased an ounce of lollipops. "There! I'm not coming any more," she said.

The face of the grocer lengthened, and the errand-boy's lips went down.

Rose came in just then, and auntie followed after.

"Ten minutes hasn't gone, Elsie," Mr. Tozer was saying, in a very plaintive voice.

"Yes, it has," answered Elsie; "more than ten minutes have gone. I've played enough to-day. I'll play some more to-morrow."

The grocer sighed heavily, and the errand-boy nearly cried.

"Julie never played like that," he said. "You don't do it pwoper, Elsie."

No, she never played it properly at all. Julie used to speak about her little girl, and taste the sweeties as a trial; then she used to talk while she bought the tea, and come as a different customer over and over again. And she didn't go on reading when the errand-boy knocked at the door. No, nobody had ever played like Julie!

"Elsie," said auntie, looking up, "it's very dull for them, you know. Won't you try to amuse them a little bit, poor things!"

"I have been playing with them," Elsie said, "but they want to play 'shop' for ever. It's such a silly, babyish kind of game. I'm sure they might play by themselves now."

"Julie must have found it babyish, too; don't you think so, Elsie? Yet she used to give up nearly all her time to play with Chubbie and Puff. I know she used to get a little tired sometimes," auntie added, "and longed to join yon bigger ones occasionally."

Rose suddenly left her chair and walked up to the counter.

"I'll play with them a little while," she said. "A pound of sugar, Mr. Tozer."

The face of the errand-boy was wreathed in smiles, and auntie nodded approvingly; and Elsie put aside her book and also joined the players. And tea and sugar and lollipops were sold as fast as the grocer could sell them.

"I'll try and play with them a little," Rose said, "every day. They do miss Julie so. She must have found them a bother sometimes, Elsie, don't you think? And we always put them upon her. Do you remember how she used to go and hide when they kept on teasing her to play? Julie was a dear little girl, Elsie; she was the best of us all, I think."

Would any one have been more surprised than Julie, I wonder, if she had heard?

What a long, dark winter it was! Dark in every way. And the children, even the bigger ones, couldn't help being fretful and peevish now and then. It seemed as if all the glad things of life had been snatched from

them in a moment. Papa was dead; Julie was dead; they were very, very poor. They missed the dear old garden most of all, and Elsie thought bitterly sometimes of Emperor and Joan in the possession of Harry and Sid.

"It was a comfort—such a comfort—to go and look at dear old Jowler in his hutch, and stroke his dear brown head. How sad it was for him to be separated from his lucerne-plot only by the garden wall! He always looked so fidgety on Saturdays," Elsie sadly said. "Don't you think so, Lance?"

"Poor old chap!" said Lance, with a sorrowful shake of his head. "How glad I am Mr. Atherton gave me leave to keep him here! Poor old Jowler! You'd have been sold like a shot, if he hadn't. And Lance pushed in his little saucer of bran and shut the door of the hutch."

And Mr. Atherton was very kind. Hardly a week passed by without an invitation coming to the little Bridgeses to a tea-party in his room. How gentle he was in his manner to them! How tenderly he always spoke. He seemed to feel their losses and griefs as much as they did themselves.

The other name—the seventh name—he very seldom mentioned; but none of them, not Chubbie even, had Julie's place on his knee.

"I believe Julie was his favorite, too," Elsie whispered to Rose.

It seemed a funny thing that they had only found out now what a favorite Julie had been with people outside their home. And then about Miss Templeton. Fancy that Miss Templeton really wanting to adopt Julie and bring her up as her own!

"But she does like me; she kissed me once," Julie's plaintive voice seemed to be saying again. Yes, she must have liked her very much. All of it had been quite true.

Somehow Miss Templeton seemed a different kind of person to the little Bridgeses now, when she passed them in her comfortable carriage with the "spanking pair of grays." She used to bow to them now. Elsie said, "It felt so strange." A little stiff nod, but that was only since her letter came.

(To be Continued.)



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