

In reading, too, she had her days of good fortune and her ill-starred days. It was on one of these that she was deep in the story of the "Little Red Hen." "Who will take this wheat to the mill to be ground into flour? The rat said 'I'll not'"—is what she should have said. But unluckily for her pride, she read it, "Who will take this wheat to the mill to be ground into a rat." The rest of the school, though used to her vagaries, found this one too much for their sense of humour and a gentle giggle greeted her mistake. Poor Rosie! She crumpled up into an unhappy little heap, shaken by sobs, and with big tears dropping on her book. The next day she did not appear at school. When she did return, the wheat, the flour, and the rat had all been safely disposed of by her little class-mate Robbie.

Between these two there was the greatest intimacy. Robbie seemed to worship at Rosie's shrine with entire devotion. He would have been quite willing—had he been allowed—to spell all her words for her, and work all her sums. Often, when he knew the answer or the word quite well, he would wait, so that she could have the rare delight of answering first.

Rosie's sisters had taught her the familiar and touching verses beginning:

"I once had a sweet little doll, dears."

and she would lisp it all complacently in her funny sing-song way, without, I dare say, understanding half of it. Being asked one day about the health of her own doll, she replied that she had none. Gradually it transpired that she had never seen a doll, and had no idea what a doll was, except that it was "something to play with." At their house, where even coal had to be sparingly used, dolls and toys were an unthinkable extravagance. What a pity it is that Santa Claus doesn't know about Rosie!

Neither Robbie nor Rosie—nor, indeed, any of their school-mates—had a very deep or intimate knowledge of the delightful art of politeness. The words "please" and "thank you" were new to them, and even when learnt, were at first considered too good for every-day use. But gradually they crept into the children's conversation.

The school boasted one unusual possession—a pet gopher. He would come to the steps to be fed, and very frequently on warm days, when the door was open, he would come on a voyage of discovery, right into the school-room. He made his home under the porch and as the summer passed, and he grew more daring, he never failed to appear at dinner-time for his share. One day, however, he did not appear at all. Rosie seemed quite worried about it. Finally she took her own piece of cake, and put it at his hole, saying: "Don't be afraid, Mr. Gopher. Please have some cake Mr. darling Gopher," and then in a lower tone, she added, "now he must say 'thank you.'"

So after all there was some progress in the education of Rosie.

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A crowd had gathered round the man who had fainted. The inevitable joker asked loudly, "Has he kicked the bucket?" "No," replied a bystander; "he has only turned a little pale."—*Martlet.*