

"ST. AUGUSTINE"

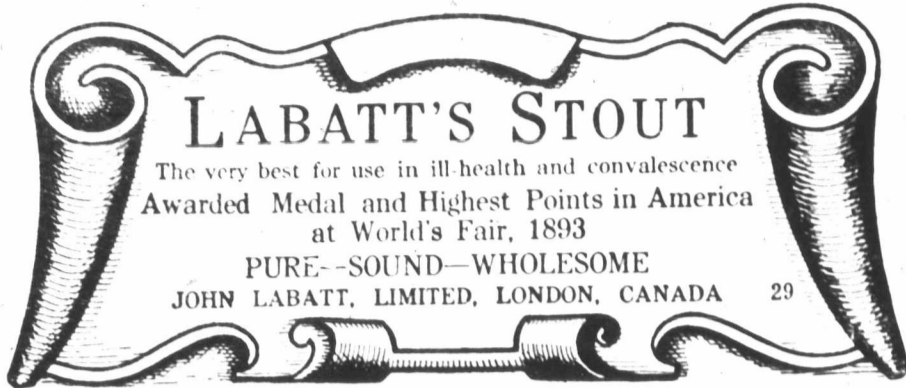
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ALTA'S LENDING SHOP.

"How many plans I had that were upset when I was," sighed Alta, rubbing a badly sprained knee, resulting from a tumble. "All my work was running-about work, and not the sitting-still kind," she went on, pouring her woes into her mother's sympathetic ear. "I really meant to be very helpful to everybody, but now I shall only be a burden to others."

"Nothing is a burden which we love to do," comforted the mother, "and we shall all be glad to take steps for you—lending legs instead of hands,

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since you still have good use of your hands. Never mind the plans that have to go, daughter. Some new ones will come."

It was a very large household, and there was plenty for all to do, even down to the youngest. Alta felt keenly of the activities at home, at school and everywhere.

The studies went on very well, but Alta groaned inwardly over being fastened to one spot, as she was, when she knew there was much to do in many places.

But as the days went by, her cheerful corner (for she kept the grumbles at bay and entertained the smile-), became a place of resort for the rest of a big family and soon she noticed that they began to expect her to have all manner of things by her, ready to produce at call. When anything was brought her, she made a place, so that when one and another called for this and that, Alta was prompt in handing it over. Her wits being sharpened by being obliged to use them in all sorts of contrivances, it finally dawned upon the crippled girl that she might make more of a business of "keeping things handy," as she expressed it. She gradually accumulated a great variety of conveniences about her, pins and needles, patches of every sort, pieces of all

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descriptions, buttons, tapes, scissors, screw-driver, file and every imaginable thing of this sort, too numerous to mention. Even towels, pencils, writing-pads, and erasers were added to the collection, for which Alta had convenient boxes, pushed under her couch within easy reach. By this time she had given a name to her occupation.

"I have established a lending shop," she declared. "Whoever needs any of my stores may come and borrow on condition that all returnable things be returned so that the next borrower may have the use of them."

As the injured member grew more comfortable (for it was a bad hurt), Alta began to exercise her ingenuity more and more in doing helpful things for others, and they found that she was always ready to "lend a hand" upon occasion. Many were stitches she took and the emergencies she met with busy hands, while the cut fingers of the little ones were tenderly bound up, and their woes mollified with sympathetic words meanwhile. The simple household remedies for common ills and ails somehow found their way to Alta's corner and were speedily available for all occasions. And the way she "lent her ears" to all manner of confidences was wonderful.



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The verdict of the household was: "We did not know what we missed before Alta's lending shop was established, but now we would not know what to do without it. She will have to keep on with it or we shall be lost."

"After all," was Alta's own reflection, "the sitting-still kind of work may be about as useful as the running-about sort. Anyhow, as it is the only kind that I can do now, I'll do it with my might. How thankful I am to be able to help a bit, even when as grandmother says, 'My strength is to sit still.'"