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WHEN WRITING TO ADVERTISERS
Please Mention "Advocate"



Did it Really Happen? If Not, Why Not?

"Milly! Where are you, Milly?"
shouted an eager voice, as a little girl
of nine years old dashed through a frame
house on a squalid back street in To-
ronto. "Oh, what a big ironing you
have done to-day," she added, stopping
short in the door of the tiny kitchen as
Milly, who was only eighteen and had
"mothered" the whole family for four
years, lifted a hot, tired face and said
wearily, "Well, what's the matter, Susy?"

"Oh, Milly, what do you think!" ex-
claimed Susy, dancing wildly round the
room and upsetting little Geordie, who
was standing on a very shaky chair try-
ing to help himself to sugar from a
chipped cup which stood on the table.
There was a wild howl of fright as he
went suddenly through the cane-bottomed
chair and rolled with it on the grimy
floor.

Milly dropped her iron and flew to pick
up the indignant child, and, as soon as
it was possible to make herself heard
above the noise and confusion, Susy went
on excitedly. "Milly, can I go to the
country next week? Miss Madison says
that the Fresh-air Mission will pay for
my ticket, and Lucy Rogers and me can
go to the same house and stay two
weeks. Perhaps, if we are very good,
the people will let us stay a month; Miss
Madison says so!" she finished triumph-
antly, with another wild war-dance round
the bewildered Milly, who was sitting on
the floor with her little brother in her
thin, tired arms. Poor Milly! no one
offered to give her a country holiday; but
she would have been indignant if anyone
had told her that she had a hard life.
Her warm, motherly heart found a world
of happiness in the clinging touch of
Geordie's baby arms around her neck—he
was just four, and small for his age—and
her days were too full of unselfish work
for any time to be wasted in self-pity.

She turned her little brother out in the
tiny yard, with an old
tin pan, and an iron
spoon for hanging pur-
poses; and then picked
up the iron and went on
with her work of press-
ing out patched and
faded pinafores and
dresses, while she
listened attentively to
Susy's explanations.

"I don't see how I
can make you fit to
go," she said at last,
doubtfully, "you have
grown out of all your
dresses but the pink and
white gingham."

"Oh, that will be all
right, for the Fresh-air
people have promised to
give us all the clothes
we need," answered
Susy, crushing that ex-
pected objection instan-
tly, "and besides, it
doesn't matter about
having a lot of clothes
—old things will do if
they are clean, and not
ragged—Miss Madison
says so."

This settled that
troublesome matter in
Susy's opinion, but
Milly thought differ-
ently. However, she planned, and turned,
and made over, with those brown hands
which were so rough and hardened with
work, and yet so gentle, and the conse-
quence of all this thoughtful sisterly kind-
ness was that Susy started off from the
Fresh-air Station a week later, looking very
trim and neat in a new navy duck sailor
suit with white linen front and collar.
Lucy, who was eleven, felt quite able to
look after herself and her small play-
mate, and the good-natured conductor
promised to keep an eye on them both.
He helped them off the train when they
reached their destination, slipping a
quarter into the hand of each as he said

good-bye and swung himself on the train
again.

The children stood forlornly on the
platform, looking after the departing
train, feeling as though they had lost
their only friend, and almost wishing
themselves back in Toronto, when a jolly
voice behind them made them jump.

"Are you the chicks from the city?"
were the words they heard, and turning
round they saw a big man with a long
brown beard and merry blue eyes. One
look into his kind face was enough—
children are quick to recognize a friend
when they see one—and the homesick feel-
ing vanished instantly, as he stooped to
kiss Susy's sweet little upturned face, and
then shook hands with the more dignified
Lucy.

"I think we belong to each other," he
went on, briskly picking up the two neat
telescope valises which the children were
carefully guarding. "My name is Wel-
come, Frank Welcome, and another Wel-
come is waiting for you at home; in
fact, you will find several lively little
Welcomes and a very nice big one. My
horse wouldn't stand still until the train
got well out of sight, or you wouldn't
have had to wait so long for this one."

Then followed a lovely drive in the
comfortable covered buggy, and at last
the white horse was pulled up in front
of a green and white gate in a green and
white fence. The house was white, with
green shutters, and a wide veranda
covered with green vines and climbing
roses. Everything seemed to be green
and white, for nearly all the flowers were
white, and the lawn was beautifully
green; a sweet-faced lady dressed in white
stood in the vine-shaded doorway, and
two little girls in white were swinging
on the gate, waving green maple boughs,
and shouting, "Hello, daddy! Have the
Fresh-air children come?"

"Have they come? I should rather
think so!" exclaimed Mr. Welcome, as he
got out and held out both arms to Susy.
"Come, little girl, jump down," he said,



helping himself to another kiss as he held
the excited child for a moment in his
arms. "Now, Lucy, won't you spare
me a kiss too?" he asked, as he lifted
the half-shy little maiden out of the
buggy. She hesitated a minute, but the
kind smile won her heart, and the kiss
so reverently asked for was given
gravely but quite willingly.

"They've come, mother!" shouted
Maggie and Mary Welcome, dragging their
guests up the gravel walk between the
long beds of sweet-smelling flowers. Shyness
vanished very quickly as the dear
mother stooped with a loving smile to
gather all four children into her arms at

once. To Susy that warm embrace
seemed like heaven, and made her fancy
that she had found her own mother again
—the mother she could just remember.

"Now you must come and see the
calves and our dear little colt," said
Maggie, "we've just heaps of things to
show you." And so they had. Susy
was wildly excited over a lot of little
pigs with queer curly tails, and Lucy
went into raptures over the white rab-
bits and tame pigeons. As for the
"dearest little kittens in the world,"
and the "cunningest" mites of puppies
that rolled and tumbled about in their
own funny, dumpy fashion,—well, I can't
begin to tell you what was said about
them. Then there were any number of
ducks and chickens of all sizes and colors,
and a fine pair of peacocks. Mary, who
had quaint little ideas of her own,
showed the visitors her very latest pet—
a bumblebee, which she kept in a card-
board box, with a pane of glass in front,
and a little window at the back covered
with another bit of glass.

"I sprinkle water on him to refresh
him when he seems miserable," she re-
marked, giving her favorite a poke with
a straw to stir him up. "I think he
looks pretty miserable now," said Lucy,
"don't you think he would like it bet-
ter if he could fly about? It seems
rather cruel to shut up a thing with
wings."

Mary stood with her eyes shut for a
minute or two—a way she had when
thinking out a problem—then she opened
them, gave a big sigh and lifted the
glass so the unhappy prisoner could go
free. Mary Welcome was not at all
willing to make any creature miserable
if she knew it. Then the sound of a
bell startled the children, and they
rushed into the house to tidy themselves
for tea, which was all ready for them
under a big maple tree on the lawn.
How pretty it looked, with the white
cloth and pink and white plates and cups,
with the bowl of pink roses and trailing
vines in the center; the bread white and
brown, and a pat of firm, golden butter.
There was a big glass dish quite full of
the freshest of red berries, and a china
pitcher of real yellow cream. There was
also a plate of ham sandwiches—Mrs.
Welcome knew what hungry children liked
best—and another plate of lettuce sand-
wiches to eat with the ham ones. Mrs.
Welcome told the children to stand up
while she thanked God for His many
good gifts, then she left them to eat and
chatter as fast as they wanted to. After
tea they carried in all the empty dishes
—at least, they were nearly all empty—
then they "helped" to milk the cows
and water the horses. All the little
folks in the neighborhood joined in this
latter bit of the "chores," and nobody
enjoyed it more than the steady old
horse you see in the picture—not the
lively horse that was afraid of trains—
and at eight o'clock the bell rang for
prayers. They all gathered round the
parlor organ and sang, "There's a
Friend for little children above the
bright blue sky." Then Mr. Welcome
read the wonderful story of Jesus walk-
ing on the sea, after which all knelt down
and repeated together the General Con-
fession from the Prayer-book, and the
Lord's Prayer. A few words of quiet
prayer followed, making the children feel
that Mr. Welcome was really speaking to
the children's Friend, and asking Him to
stay with them that night. "Now, you
must be off to bed, little folks," he said,
as they rose from their knees, "you'll
want to be up early to-morrow to help
with the haying."

But Maggie clasped both arms round
her mother's neck as she stooped to kiss
her, and whispered, "Can't we just sing
'Abide with me,' first?" So they
slipped off into the land of happy dreams
that night with the words of that
"sweetest evening hymn" echoing in
their hearts, to wake with the birds next
morning, wondering how anybody can
really like to live in a hot, smoky city,
when there is such a lot of room in
God's wonderful country.

Did it really happen? If not, then
why not?
COUSIN DOROTHY.

Prize Competitions.

I hope to announce the winners in our
Puzzle Competition next week or the week
after, but you can begin at once on an-
other.

Prizes will be given for the best essays

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