



"LOOK-NG MY BEST!"

"Do it at home, and you will do it abroad."

A Coward's Heroism.

The walk to school was a pleasant one. Helen sang softly to herself as she swung along the shaded country road with her bag of school-books swaying to and fro on her arm, like a great pendulum of knowledge. At the corner Leonard Green joined her as usual. That was one reason why the walk to school was a pleasant one. Helen and Leonard liked one another thoroughly, and with pure school boy and girl frankness.

'Hello! I expected to miss you to-day,' cried Leonard. 'I had to wait for Aunt Kitty to finish a letter.'

'And I had to wait to wash the dishes,' said Helen. 'It was Mildred's turn to do them; but she began by scalding her hand, poor child, so I had to stop and finish them after I had made the beds. You know we take turns.'

'My! Wish I had a brother to take turns with me!'

'Yes, but you would have to share your pleasures, too. How would you always like to take turns on

your trips to the city? How would you like continually to be taking your choice between some pleasure and the overwhelming blessedness of generosity? Say! How would you always like to feel you must either give up the best end of a thing or else make your brother give it up? H'm?' asked Helen, nodding her head merrily.

'Well, that would be Dobbin's choice,' admitted Leonard; 'but perhaps we could both go together sometimes. And a thing is always more fun when there is another fellow along. Why! What does this mean?' For, chatting carelessly along, they had, in turning a corner, come directly upon a large sign which blocked the road:

'Dangerous passing!

This road closed for repairs.'

'It evidently means that they are repairing the old red bridge that they've been talking about so long,' said Helen. 'But let's go on! They can't have torn it all up so early in the day, and it's a mile farther around the other way.'

'It'll be a mile and a half if we go clear to the bridge and then have to go back.'

'But I shan't go back if there is a single plank to cross on!' declared Helen, merrily.

'Then, certainly, we would better take the other road, so you won't be tempted to run too great a risk,' said Leonard.

'H'm!' sniffed Helen. 'If I'm not afraid, you needn't be a coward for me! Come on!' The voice was imperative, and the tone scornful. Leonard knew it would be wiser to obey the warning on the sign-board, but Helen's scorn provoked him to walk on with her.

'There!' cried the girl, when they came in sight of the old red bridge. 'There are the men at work on the bridge. And see! There are planks all the way across!'

'Shore now, Missy, them planks ain't nothin' but the rotten lining,' said the foreman. 'I wouldn't warrant 'em to bear up under a cat.'

Helen went up and tried the end plank boldly with a determined little foot.

'Shore, Missy, they mayn't be that strong all the way across,' said the man, dropping his iron and coming towards her. 'Ye'd best not try another.'

For answer Helen gave a bright little laugh, and, slipping away from all detaining hands, sprang from board to board as lightly as a sunbeam, until she stood on the firm ground at the south end of the bridge. Then she turned, and laughed again at their frightened faces.

'Now, Leonard, show your courage!'

'No, no!' cried the men, hastening to prevent, by force, if need be, this foolhardy attempt. 'The lad weighs fifty pounds more. He shall not try it!'

'But the boards did not even bend or crack,' said Helen. 'They are as firm as they were last week when tons of hay came over—only the top planks off. Come on, Leonard, or you will be late for school; and I shall tell them all it was because you were such a "fraid-cat." Come on!'

'If ye step one fut on that bridge, I wash me hands of all consequence,' said the foreman.

'Come on,' laughed Helen, 'if you are not a coward.'

Leonard set his lips firmly. A