

The Story Page.

Some Out-of-School Equations.

BY OLIVE E. DANA.

An exquisite copy of a famous picture had just been placed in the window of a city art-store, and all the morning a little crowd of passers-by had lingered before it, each group melting away, after a moment, to be replaced at once by another. As the bells rang the noon-hour, the throng on the pavements were seen to change character, and to move less leisurely. But even now there were many who snatched a minute or two to glance at the picture, despite the fact that an hour is, at best, a brief lunch time, when there are two or three miles of pavement to be traveled, going and returning.

One of these, a girl, seemed, as she lingered, quite forgetful of both the hour and the place. It was not the first time, either. Indeed, this window, or the moments she spent before it, had become one of her daily pleasures. No re-arrangement of its contents, no withdrawal of or addition to its treasures, could escape her notice. But she was presently aware that some one had paused close beside her, and a familiar voice at once accosted her.

"Ah, Stella! You are quite as fond of pictures as you used to be!" The speaker was a young woman in reality hardly older than Stella herself, but she betrayed at once the possession of culture and experience, the gains from larger and finer associations, which should accrue from added and well-used years.

"This is a fine copy," she said, after a discriminating look. "I was afraid it might be disappointing. But this is almost the picture itself."

"Yes, I saw it in Munich last year." Then as her glance wandered from the centre of the spacious window to the other things grouped beside and before it, she exclaimed:

"Ah, there are two or three exquisite madonnas! The Sistine, and Raphael's of the gold-finch; and that copy of the Correggio is very nearly perfect. I must have that for my collection." And she passed into the store, stopping to say warmly:

"Come to see me, won't you, Stella? I'm to be at home all the winter. You'd find me almost any evening, and always Thursdays."

But Stella hardly made answer, and went on her way up-town more quickly, indeed, as must needs be for the lingering, but with a vague discontent in her heart which presently shaped itself in definite, if unuttered complaint.

Edith Decker can have a collection! And she knows all the madonnas by heart. Why shouldn't she, if she's seen them all in the originals? And the rest of the old masters and the modern ones too? She didn't though, and wasn't any quicker to see points, than some of the rest of us, at school! She keeps up, though; she has had a chance to, and goes ahead, and the rest of us forget and fall behind.

"I'd like to keep up with my drawing, and a little with the art reading, as well as with some other things. And I thought of a collection like that long, long ago. But a dollar now and then, or even fifty cents, for a photograph you want and mayn't see again, is something. Quite likely you haven't it to spend. Though 't would keep up one's interest in such things wonderfully, and be a happiness beside. The — Circle had some good art-readings, but I couldn't seem to manage it, somehow, either for the time or the money. I wish I could have. Dear me, there's Lettie Maynard beckoning, and I haven't a minute."

Nevertheless she paused at the foot of the steps of the house from one of whose windows the signal had come.

"I won't keep you," said Lettie, breathless with her run downstairs. "I had to tell you that Mrs. B—, we all want to see her! lectures at the chapel tomorrow evening, instead of the missionary meeting. It's our regular night you know, and we were to have the reports, but we couldn't let this chance go by! I'll call in for you."

"But I don't know who Mrs. B— is, or does, or did," reflected Stella, as she went on, a little faster. "I don't always go to the missionary meetings, either, Lettie knows. But this is different, I guess. It must be what Dr. Cameron was speaking of in the car this morning, with Mrs. Leland. Dear me! I'm rusting all out, and on all sides of me! And how can I help it? But I'll ask the folks about this," she said.

But "the folks," or at least her father and brother, were discussing eagerly some events in the business world, already become of much general significance, to which report in the evening paper gave even graver import. There was no chance for her inquiry, even if the making it had not presently escaped her remembrance. And, besides, she found herself curiously interested in what they were saying. Was the interest, though, less or more, because of her own realized ignorance?

"Anybody could read the papers," she told herself. "I will, tonight, after I run in to Mollie's a minute. I really ought to know about that woman!"

Mollie was busy with a problem her younger sister had brought her. "That equation must be wrong, somehow," she exclaimed, pushing the algebra aside, and bending again over the slip Ruth had submitted. "Why, yes. Here, Ruthie, your work was all right; but, don't you see, you took the wrong quantity. That needs't come in at all. See? Put this in, instead, and you have just what you wanted."

"I wish I could set my calculations right as easily," she sighed, as the young girl turned away with her elucidated problem, and with relieved thanks. "Or that somebody could tell me how to go about it. There were two or three things I wanted so much to do this quarter, and some others that it seems to me I shall have to have, and the most of them I shall have to let go again. It is so queer I don't see where the money does go."

"I always put down just what I use mine for, as I go along," said Stella, with some satisfaction. "Every least little thing. And I have ever since I have earned any."

"Does it make it go any farther?" asked Mollie, shyly.

Stella flushed. "Perhaps it would, if I considered it more," she said, after a moment, and quite seriously.

"And one could do that very often, without the memoranda, and beforehand," rejoined Mollie, laughing regretfully. "Oh, I know what I used mine for that I needn't have—some of it. I can think back a month or two."

"It's just because we don't think how we shall use it—or our time, either, or at least our leisure," said Stella, soberly. "And that is worth even more. It is like Ruthie's equation," she went on. "If you put the wrong thing into it, or what doesn't belong there, and needn't be, why, you can't get the best things out, try as hard as you will. No," rising, "I guess I won't stay tonight—I was here all last evening, you know. I just ran in to speak about the lecture at the chapel."

"Mrs. B—? And it's the Mrs. B— that wrote 'World Missions,' isn't it? The book Miss Payne read with us. And some one spoke of her at the meeting last month. Why, don't hurry, Stella—and you wanted the bolero pattern. I'll find it."

But Stella was already at the door. No, you needn't. I don't think I shall use it. Come to think of it, I guess the waist will do as it is. 'Twas new in the spring, anyway. Yes, I'll call in for you. Lettie is going to come around for me, and we'll both stop for you."

And Stella shut the door softly, but firmly—if by even a look, she enticed Mollie out into the moon-light, just "to go a piece," little girl fashion, why, there was an end to what either of them might do that night, or think.

And the thinking seemed to Stella, just then, of first importance.

"Money isn't everything," she murmured, as she lighted her lamp and turned to her desk for a certain red covered memorandum book. "Nor the best thing. But it does stand for a good many of them, when you come to use it—or it could. 'Cant' mayn't be in the dictionary, but it's in mathematics, all the way through, and in life. And there are equations and equations! The things that have the same equivalents are far enough from being the same things, in their results. What do I spend my money for, anyway? Dress, and what goes with it; confectionery; 'sundries'—which are mostly nothing at all, to keep. I'll take out those. H'm—fall jacket—could have worn my spring one; waist—I must have a dozen; stocks—I have any number that could be freshened. Making over suit; rettrimming hat—I could have done without those."

"I do believe," she said at last, after some minutes of calculation, "that I could have saved enough these two years-on just clothes and 'sundries' to have given me the western trip father wanted me to take so much, and to have paid the art tuition, and bought me some good books and pictures besides; and I should have done just as much at home and in the church, too. Well! And now I begin to see how some of my time goes," she mused, rocking back and forth, gently; "to say nothing of the hours I know I've taken to putter over all those fixings I needn't have had, and—and to eat the candy, and to loiter around and buy the things, Saturdays and half-holidays. If I've been half as careless of my minutes as I have of my money, why, I don't wonder I'm rusty. I should think I'd be corroded through and through. And perhaps I am," with a sober little smile.

"The very worst of it is, too," she reflected, letting pencil and paper slip to the floor, and clasping her hands about her knees, meditatively—"the worst of it all is, you get used to doing without the real things. It is bad enough to miss them as you go along. But to stop wanting them—ugh! And you would, of course, if it were long enough. I mayn't have any more to put into life," she said, rising and going over to her book-shelves with a look of pleased re-discovery. "Not very much

money, nor leisure, nor mind! But I will be particular about what I do have stands for."

The Scripture lesson which Dr. Cameron read in the pulpit the next Sunday morning was the parable of the talents. Stella lifted her head quickly, to hear; and Mollie, yes, Mollie turned half about to see if her friend remembered. And then both the girls listened eagerly. All the more reason, then, for the diligent care in the making of these equations. For the problems were of God's own setting, and the things to be computed "his goods," awaiting his increase.—The Standard.

Lincoln's Boyhood.

The child's life during the time the family lived in Kentucky appears to have been entirely uneventful. He helped his mother—after he was three years old—in the simple household duties, went to the district-school, and one of young Lincoln's playmates now living is an old man nearly 100 years old, named Austin Gollaher, whose mind is bright and clear, and who never tires of telling of the days Lincoln and he "were little tikes, and played together." This old man, who yet lives in the log-house in which he has always lived, a few miles from the old Lincoln place, tells entertaining stories about the president's boyhood.

Mr. Gollaher says that they were together more than the other boys in school, that he became fond of his little friend, and he believed that Abe thought a great deal of him.

In speaking of various events of minor importance in their boyhood days, Mr. Gollaher remarked: "I once saved Lincoln's life." Upon being urged to tell of the occurrence, he thus related it: "We had been going to school together one year; but the next year we had no school because there were so few scholars to attend, there being only about twenty in the school the year before. Consequently, Abe and I had not much to do; but, as we did not go to school, and our mothers were strict with us, we did not get to see each other very often. One Sunday morning my mother waked me up early, saying she was going to see Mrs. Lincoln, and that I could go along. Glad of the chance, I was soon dressed and ready to go. After my mother and I got there, Abe and I played all through the day. While we were wandering up and down the little stream called Knob Creek, Abe said: 'Right up there'—pointing to the east—we saw a covey of partridges yesterday. Let's go over and get some of them.' The stream was swollen, and was too wide for us to jump across. Finally, we saw a narrow foot-log, and we concluded to try it. It was narrow, but Abe said, 'Let's coon it.'"

"I went first, and reached the other side all right. Abe went about half-way across, when he got scared and began trembling. I hollered to him, 'Don't look down, nor up, nor sideways, but look right at me, and hold on tight!' But he fell off into the creek, and as the water was about seven or eight feet deep and I could not swim, and neither could Abe, I knew it would do no good for me to go in after him. So I got a stick—a long water-sprout—and held it out to him. He came up, grabbing with both hands, and I put the stick into his hands. He clung to it, and I pulled him out on the bank, almost dead. I got him by the arms and shook him well, and then rolled him on the ground, when the water poured out of his mouth. He was all right very soon. We promised each other that we would never tell anybody about it, and never did for years. I never told anyone of it until after Lincoln was killed.—St. Nicholas.

Spare the Children's Feet.

A ragged woman was crossing the corner of a public park in London, where the children of the poor are accustomed to play, many of them barefoot. A burly policeman stationed on the corner watched the woman suspiciously. Half way across she stopped and picked up something which she hid in her apron. In an instant the policeman was by her side. With gruff voice and threatening manner he demanded:

"What are you carrying off in your apron?" The woman seemed embarrassed and refused to answer. Thereupon the officer of the law thinking that she had doubtless picked up a pocket book, which she was trying to make way with, threatened to arrest her unless she told him at once what she had in her apron.

At this the woman reluctantly unfolded her apron and disclosed a handful of broken glass. In stupid wonderment the policeman asked:

"What do you want with that stuff?"

A flush passed over the woman's face, then she answered simply:

"If you please, sir, I just thought I'd like to take it out of the way of the children's feet."

Blessing on the kind-hearted caretaker who was so thoughtful of the children's needs, and the children's feet. And should not we imitate so good an example, and take out of the path of the little ones any thing which can wound them, injure them, or cause them to stumble?—Presbyterian.

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