

the yard over, it will not look so terribly untidy. I'm sorry, Roberta, but there isn't any money at all to do anything this spring; I told you that before. But perhaps Mrs. Johnson will give you some roots and plants when she thins out her beds, and you can do your best with them.'

Bob had her permission, and she lay awake three hours that night formulating plans. The first gray light of the March morning found her at work in the yard, with a shovel and an old wheelbarrow which the workmen who built the house had left in the coal shed.

'I can work this way, before school and after,' she said, when Valentia called her to breakfast. 'Doesn't that front space look better? I put the lime in the alley; it's a good disinfectant, isn't it? I don't believe it will take me so very long.'

'But, Roberta, look at your hands!' the older sister protested. 'This isn't any kind of work for a girl. I wish father were at home. I don't believe he would let you do it.'

'Oh, well, I can wear gloves,' Roberta answered, glancing indifferently at her red and blistered hands. 'And the worst part of it—when I'm getting the earth, maybe—I can do before people are up, if you're ashamed to have me seen doing it. Don't try to stop me. I was meant for a boy, anyhow, and I simply can't live up to this house; not unless I have a garden.'

Bob had a well-defined plan of campaign, which included clearing, spading, the wheeling of rich earth in barrow loads from a riverbank at the edge of town, not far away, and the subsequent seeding and watering of the lawn. She was independent enough to have carried out her scheme in spite of comment and criticism, but on the fourth day of her work an authority stronger even than the voice of her absent father intervened, and stretched poor Bob on the sitting-room lounge, there to pass a week in the loathly occupation of sewing and submitting to Valentia's therapeutics.

'I knew you were not strong enough,' the older sister observed frequently, as she rubbed liniment and administered tonics. 'I might have known you would catch cold. You'll simply have to give it up, Roberta. If this had been one degree worse, we should have had to call the doctor, and we can't afford to call the doctor. You must look at it sensibly.'

Bob had sense enough to recognize the situation. She regretted sincerely the additional burden on Valentia's busy days, and hemmed napkins meekly as a penance, though her soul revolted within her at every sitch.

'Buttercup,' she said one day with sudden resolution, as the cat cuddled between her arm and the sofa pillow, 'there's only one way. The yard must be finished! That means I must earn the money for it, since I can't do the work. There's only one way to earn the money. O Buttercup, it means Hallie Johnson!' Bob buried her face in the cushion and groaned.

'I like Hallie, you know, Buttercup,' she went on, presently; 'and nobody could help being sorry for her. Fancy a girl of pretty nearly my age being put away on the shelf for all time. Fancy a girl having nothing to do but read and crochet! I'm glad I'm not an invalid. But if I go to companion Hallie, I'll have to be a real

lady. I don't like being a lady. I'll have to mend every least little bit of a tear—Hallie must have everything neat; and my hair—O Buttercup, my hair! And I'll have to practice things on the piano, and hunt up "little cheerful stories" to read to her—I loathe little cheerful stories. And I'll have to learn new stitches and all such things. Oh a lady—made out of me, Buttercup! Do you suppose we can do it, for the yard's sake?'

For the yard's sake it was done, nevertheless. Bob rose up from the sofa, pale and resolute, at the end of the week. She fell upon her second-best gown, mended two rents, sewed on a fresh binding and two missing hooks, and sallied forth to Mrs. Johnson's. The hours of each afternoon after school, thenceforth—hours once consecrated to delightful tomboy pursuits and unpractical imaginings and doings, were set apart for Hallie Johnson's entertainment and edification.

'You don't know how I've wanted you, Bob,' the sick girl said, pathetically—and Bob felt a sense of relief at the sound of her nickname. 'But I couldn't take any comfort in appropriating you every day, until you were willing to make it a business arrangement. Now we can feel that we're helping Valentia, while we are having a good time together. Show me that pineapple pattern, that's a dear!'

Bob groaned in spirit, but instructed faithfully. At the end of her first week, she had two rewards—one in the bright coins which paid Patrick Henessy for spading up the yard, and won his promise to haul some waggon loads of black earth for similar payment on the next Saturday; the other, in the realization that Hallie Johnson didn't want her companion to transform herself into a prim and staid young person of Valentia's pattern, but simply to be her own best self. Bob's very best self, in the inmost depths of it, did recognize the value of polished boots, spotless collars, and smooth hair, and their compatibility with the pleasures of existence, on occasion; for such things were expected even of boys in a state of civilization. But on the third day of her attempt to be very feminine, as she was reading aloud one of the 'little cheerful stories' which she loathed, Hallie Johnson leaned forward and tore the paper from her hand.

'Bob Ferguson, it isn't you! Be you—tell me about those robins in your coal shed—was it in the coal shed?'

Bob laughed, and the chain fell away from her imprisoned soul. Thenceforward she was free to be herself with Hallie. Yet imperceptibly, and so gradually that she could not realize it, the brusqueness and carelessness which had long vexed Valentia's soul slipped away from her, under the daily practice of personal daintiness and loving consideration for another's taste and sensibilities—a practice which had been too infrequent in other days. She was Bob still—frank, sunny, bearing the wholesome atmosphere of outdoor freedom and breezy gayety; yet with a sweet new womanliness mingling with the boyish good-fellowship she gave to Hallie. Week after week, the yard came nearer to the ideal of which she had herself dreamed; and Hallie demanded frequent reports of it, sharing all Bob's own exultation when the first spears of grass or clover showed above the well-rolled

black surface, and the green tinge spread and deepened under the spring sunshine. There were wonderful flower beds, too, to be planned for, and bits of shrubbery, and vines for the porch. Hallie sent for books on Civic Improvement and Artistic Gardening from the library, and the two girls waxed enthusiastic over the development of a beautiful thing which was to be all their own, from its earliest beginnings in the bare ugliness of the yard into which the Fergusons had moved. In considering the possibilities of a 'cozy corner' on the porch, Bob began to take her first real interest in sofa pillows and denim. She was coming into her womanly inheritance, without knowing it—the instinct of beauty and order, the transforming of waste places into bits of home. Valentia began to perceive, after a while, as Hallie had perceived for weeks, with inward rejoicing, but without the risk of comment.

One day in early summer, Bob wheeled Hallie over on her chair to view the glories of the yard. There was a parable, to which the keen perceptions of the invalid girl were fully alive, between the garden, in all its beautiful incompleteness, the imperfection which was yet so full of hope, and the waking woman-life of its young creator.

'It isn't finished yet,' Bob said, radiantly, as Hallie and Valentia paused in their praises. 'It will all be lovelier by and by. But it isn't a waste wilderness any more, I've redeemed it. And I did it myself!'

Valentia and Hallie looked from the trim flower beds and the green lawn up at Bob's girlish figure, in all its new daintiness and distinction, and at the sweet face where the new life and tenderness showed so plainly.

'All yourself!' Valentia repeated, approvingly; and Buttercup rubbed against Bob's ankles and purled his assent.

'Jesus Has Got Me Now.'

(Faithful Words.)

At a children's service, a little girl was listening eagerly to the words of the speaker, as he pressed upon his young hearers the joy of accepting the Lord Jesus as their own Saviour. The child was deeply anxious, and when spoken to burst into tears. 'And are you trusting the Lord Jesus?' she was asked, and at once replied, 'Oh, yes.' 'Why, how long has that been?' The reply was, 'Only just now, when you were telling us to trust Jesus, just where we were sitting, and I did.'

As they were about to say 'good-night,' the speaker put the following little test before her:

'Now, J—, when you came to the service this evening you did not belong to the Lord Jesus, but you are going out of this place a believer in him and belonging to him. But to-morrow morning you will, perhaps, be tempted not to believe that Jesus has really saved you. If Satan does so worry you, what shall you tell him?'

A smile instantly lit up her happy and thoughtful face, and she replied in a simple and yet confident manner, 'Oh, I shall tell him that Jesus has got me now!'

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