

The New Girl

'You couldn't spare me a very little money, could you, father?' Janet leaned over him as he counted some bills.

'If it is for something positively necessary, my daughter.'

'I can't say it is exactly that; but I never get a cent of pocket money now, father.'

He sighed heavily as he answered: 'I know it, and I'm sorry; but the pressure seems harder and harder every year. Wants seem to increase faster than the means of supplying them. Hand this to your mother, Janet.'

'Forgive me for worrying you, father. I ought to be making my own spending money, but there are so few ways of doing that unless I go away from home.'

'We can't let you do that. There's enough for all, if we are careful.'

'Take it out to Bridget,' said her mother, as Janet gave her the money from her father.

'Twelve dollars. Dear me!' said Janet to herself, rather fretfully, as she walked slowly to the kitchen. 'Bridget has earned it, and I don't grudge it to her, but how I wish I could earn twelve dollars.'

'Wirra, wirra!' Bridget sat on the floor, holding an open letter and rocking herself backward and forward with dismal groans. Pots, pans and kettles were around in their usual confusion. 'It's meself must be lavin' yez the day, Miss Janet.'

Servants were hard to find, and Janet's face wore the accustomed expression of dismay with which such notices were always received, as she asked: 'What's the matter, Bridget?'

'It's me sister's got the fayver, bad, and it's meself must be going to her. An' it's six weeks entirely I'll be shtayin' when it's so far to be goin'.'

As Janet handed her the money, a sudden thought came to her.

'I'm sorry for you, Bridget. Of course you must go if you must. Perhaps we can get along without anyone, till you are ready to come back.'

'Mother,' she said, turning to her, 'Bridget's going away for a few weeks.' Mother's face grew dismal as Janet's had, for she was not strong, and there were four boys.

'An' plase ye, ma'am, it's afther coming to try to get the place I am.'

'What do you mean, Janet?' said her mother, laughing as the young girl courtesied low.

'Yon can't do it all, Janet.'

'What I can't do, I'll hire. I want to do something, and I want to get a little money I can feel is my own, and that I have a right to spend if I want a new book or a bit of music or anything else. I can't get a school—there are forty applications where there is one vacancy. I can't get more than one or two music scholars. I can't dispose of fancy work or painting, and if I could, I might dabble over them for a month and not clear more than Bridget does in a week, there are so many waiting to do that kind of work. Kitchen work is the only work there appears to be plenty of for girls.'

'You may try it, but I think you will get tired of it.'

Janet spent a good share of her first week's wages in buying gingham aprons, rubber gloves, and paying a stout woman to come for half a day to scrub and scour

until the last traces of good-natured, slovenly Bridget's presence were removed. Then, with clean kitchen, clean utensils, and clean towels, Janet took hold of her work with a right good will.

'We'll all co-operate,' said father, when he heard of her intention.

'We'll all co-operate,' cried the boys; and they kept their word well in bringing wood and water and sweeping the walks. And after the first morning, she found that Tom had made the fire and ground the coffee before she came down.

'There's great satisfaction in doing things thoroughly,' said Janet to her mother, after the first day or two. 'Before, when we have been without a girl, I have always hated it because I tried how much I could shove out of the way. Now that I am making a business of it, I don't feel that way. And, mother, you would be astonished to see how little cleaning there is to be done when nobody makes any unnecessary dirt, or how much work can be saved by using your wits to save it.'

She never told her mother how her back ached during those first days of unusual exercise. This wore off as she became accustomed to it. Every day she learned more and more to simplify her work. A few minutes in the kitchen just before bed-time she arranged things exactly to her hand that there was no hurrying or crowding at the busy time in the morning. Careful handling of table linen and other things made the wash smaller, so that the stout woman could do two weeks' wash in one. Janet found that there were few days in which she could not sit down when the dinner work was over. Other surprising things came to light.

'What's the matter that you don't burn any wood now-a-days?' said Tom; 'I have so little splitting to do.' Bridget, like so many of her sisterhood, had always seemed to consider it her bounden duty to keep up a roaring fire all day, regardless of whether there was need of it or not, and father always looked blank over the fuel bill. One-half the quantity was now found amply sufficient, and a difference was soon apparent in many other things. The food for one person is always noticeable in a small family where a rigid hand must be kept on expenses, besides which, Janet was not slow in perceiving how many things went further than before. Odds and ends were utilized which had been thrown away or had counted for nothing, for no one felt afraid of scraps done over by Janet's hands.

'We never were so comfortable before,' said father.

'We never had such good things to eat,' declared the boys, who had highly appreciated the dainty though plain cookery, as contrasted with Bridget's greasy preparations; for Janet, full of an honest determination to earn her wages, had given much attention to the getting up of palatable, inexpensive dishes, seeking a variety, where Bridget had moved in one groove.

'I almost dread having Bridget come back,' said mother.

But the time came when she was hourly expected. Mother sighed as she took a note of the spotless kitchen, in which it was now pleasant to come and lend a hand at cookery, or sit with her knitting, while Janet moved briskly about.

'It's time I was settling with you, Janet,' she said. 'Six weeks—I owe you \$18.'

'No; six off for hiring Mrs. Holt and a few other things.'

'Not a bit off, dear; I've been looking over the bills for the month, and I find quite a difference; more than pays for all your extras. Not only in meat and groceries and fuel, but I notice it in the wear and tear and breakage—dear me! I don't think \$5 a week covers the expense of Bridget being here.'

'You don't mother, dear?' said Janet, in great delight; 'then you are not tired of your new girl and anxious to have Bridget back?'

'No, indeed,' said mother, fervently.

'Then she isn't coming back. I've found my way of earning, and am going to stick to it for a while. It isn't all pleasant, to be sure, but I don't know any kind of business that is. Only,' she said, laughing, 'I shall insist upon having my wages regularly paid as if I were Bridget. I shall clothe myself out of them, and so be saving dear old overworked father about \$5 a week, if you are right in your calculations, mother.'

'What will you do with Bridget when she comes?'

'Mrs. Whitcomb wants a girl, so she can go there.' 'O mother, dear! it's a real comfort to feel as if I were supporting myself. And I wonder why I never thought before how pleasant a way it is, this doing kind and pleasant things for you all.'

And Janet worked on, feeling sure she had found her best way of securing her pocket money in this expending of her energies for those she loved. How many daughters restless and fretful for something to do, might find the same way blessed to themselves and to others in homes made bright and sweet by their faithful ministrations.—Source Unknown.

My Endeavor.

(The Rev. Charles A. Dickinson, D.D., in 'C.E. World'.)

I strive, but fail. O why, dear Lord,
Must this my constant record be?
Why finds each daily westerling sun
My work for Thee but half begun,
Or done, alas! so selfishly?

I'm tempted oft, and often yield,
For Pleasure has a siren voice.
She sings my scruples quite away,
And with her charming roundelay
Deprives me of the power of choice.

My faith is strong when skies are bright,
But sunny days are all too brief.
When clouds arise and troubles come,
My lips are sealed, my heart is dumb
And full of weary unbelief.

And yet, dear Lord, my comfort is
That all my heart is known to Thee.
Thou knowest that I love Thee, Lord,
And, Saviour mine, I have Thy word
That this shall my salvation be.

A Bagster Bible Free.

Send five new subscribers to the 'Northern Messenger' at thirty cents each and secure a nice Bagster Bible, suitable for Sabbath School or Day School. Bound in black pebbled cloth, with red edges, measures seven inches by five and three-quarter inches when open.