

# THE DANBURY REPORTER-POST.

W. H. Ames

"NOTHING SUCCEEDS LIKE SUCCESS."

THE FLOWERS COLLECTION

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**A RAINY DAY.**

Now just take a peep at the window and see—  
—Oh, dear me!

How cloudy and dark, and how dreary and gray!  
What a day!

The rain seems to frown  
As it comes pouring down;  
And the wet, muddy earth looks as cross as the sky.

So do I,  
How could I expect to be happy and gay,  
Such a day?

When things are as dull and as still as a mouse in the house,  
Oh, dear, if I knew  
Of something to do!

The world looks as if it were having a cry.  
So am I,  
If only the sunshine would smile out again;  
And the rain,  
And the dark, gloomy clouds, and the mist,  
and the gray

Go away—  
Why, then you would see  
How merry I'd be!

If only the sun and the weather would try,  
So would I,  
—Sydney Payne, in St. Nicholas.

**The Postmistress.**

BY SHELLA B. EDGECOME.

"Muffins and crumpets made to order." Thus ran the written notice, penciled, too, in characters nearly approaching half-text, stuck up in one of the few principal shops facing the main street.

The unimportant village of "Lamerton" lay somewhat far away from any town, and therefore did a fair amount of steady going business on its own account. Foremost of all ranked the repository, or store, rented by Janet Lisle, in which she sold stationery, newspapers, and the magazines of the day if duly ordered in time, besides a variety of useful odds and ends. She was also the village postmistress, and carried out the duties of her office with a marked regard to promptitude. In each of these pursuits, however, she was aided by her pretty and winsome niece, Elsie Falconbridge.

In all reality, Elsie was more mistress of the postal department than Janet Lisle herself. It was she who ordinarily undertook the dispatch of that twice-a-day letter-bag, bestowing upon each mis-sive previously the due official stampmark. "Janet Lisle's right hand, in fact," as every one said. She, too, it was who made the muffins and crumpets—muffins and crumpets which were so popular in the village that no one ever dreamt of having a tea party without also having "muffins and crumpets" to match.

"Oblige me with a two-cent stamp, Miss Falconbridge, won't you?" and a somewhat elderly man at that moment stared her in the face—this necessarily, however—through the gap made in the wire network marking off the space allotted to the postoffice department.

She handed him what he required.

"And a registered envelope, also," he said.

Again she had fulfilled his request.

"Thank you," and without more ado he deposited a twenty-dollar note within the same.

"All right," he soliloquized as old gentlemen are so fond of doing. "Come that's done, at any rate," he added, in self-congratulatory fashion.

Then came aloud, questioninglly.

"In the letter-box!—or shall I leave it with you?"

"You can leave it here, sir," answered Elsie, quietly.

Others were now coming in fast, demanding this and that, and in adopting a calm exterior lay her only chance of attending rightly to each petitioner.

Janet Lisle also was unusually busy that afternoon. Miss Veal, the richest old lady in the parish, gave a large tea party that very evening, and muffins and crumpets were accordingly being sent off in startlingly large quantities.

"Is there any letter waiting for me to-day, please?" asked a somewhat timid voice a few minutes later on.

"No, Miss Josephine, nothing."

"I am sorry, disappointing—is it not?"

The two speakers seemed fully to comprehend each other. There existed, apparently, a sort of pleasant sympathy between them.

Both were pretty. Both looked good, and also thoroughly in earnest. Only that the assistant postmistress appeared full of brightness and life, and the girl now facing her wore the aspect of being tired of life already.

"Yes, very. I am sorry too."

"Thank you. You are always kind. I will look in again to-morrow, if my doing so will not trouble you too much."

"Not at all. Miss Josephine."

The last named was already moving away to make room for some one else. Elsie Falconbridge had, however, not yet completed her business with the late lawyer's daughter.

"Auntie," she whispered, "take my place here for a moment."

Janet Lisle nodded in assent.

"Do come in here an instant with me, won't you?" and Elsie signed that Miss Josephine should accompany her into the cozy back parlor, where all was now in readiness for tea. "The fact is, Miss Josephine, I've done the most stupid thing imaginable to-day—made a mistake, and prepared nearly twice the number of crumpets that will be wanted by anybody. Isn't it absurd of me? You won't mind—no, I'm sure you won't mind—Miss Josephine—helping me out of my trouble?"

"But how?" came, hesitatingly, in response. Then came—ah! so bravely, for it is ever difficult to tell the plain truth in such matters—"I can't. It's quite impossible. We have no money. Don't you understand?"

"Absurd!" was the interruption.

"Why, it's a favor I'm asking of you; don't you see? I knew you would be in to-day, for certain, and would befriend me. It's only that I want you, if you don't mind the trouble, to carry home a dozen or so to your sweet mother. Many of the dozen she has ordered from us in the past, when, perhaps, we haven't been able to supply her. One can't forget that fact, you know, in a hurry. So there they are, Miss Josephine, all hot and ready—buttered, for I don't think you would know how to do it yourself. You had better go out this way, by the side door, and then no one will be the wiser for the favor you've done me."

For one brief instant her worn, pale-faced companion had but down impulsively and laid her own soft cheek against Elsie's, and the next, wholly unable to speak, she had disappeared.

"A rather heavier mail-bag to-night than usual, wasn't it, Elsie?"

"Yes, aunt. Thank you for doing it up for me. At any rate, the registered letters did not occupy you a long while."

"No, child."

Meanwhile Elsie had been engaged in peenning a dozen words or more upon a large sheet of letter-paper, and the following morning, side by side with the well-known "muffin and crumpet" statement, appeared the following:

"A young lady, clever and well-educated, desires at once a good morning or daily engagement as governess. Terms moderate. Excellent references. Apply for particulars within."

Miss Josephine had, in a most inappreciable way, won the woman's entire sympathy, and also the admiration of Elsie. And yet the latter never seemed to forget the difference in station that she considered still existed between her favorite and herself. She only knew that the lawyer's daughter was a very model of sweet patience, and that she and all at home were as poor as any church mouse.

"Oh, my!" exclaimed little Bob Travers that morn'g, as the letters were brought in. "What shoals of letters! What a lot of governesses we shall have, mother! I do declare if it won't be just like an evening party."

"Hold your tongue, Bob!" urged his father, perceptively. "Leave the room."

Letters of importance had to be discussed, most of them bearing reference to what Bob had termed the "evening party."

Some applicants declaring they were experienced, because middle-aged. Others asserted that they were young, and therefore generally regarded as having an attractive way with children; which latter statement was yet worse. The last-described young ladies would perhaps prove attractive in other ways, and fall desperately in love with the quiet bachelor—Uncle Fred.

No, that wouldn't do at all, and in a decided fit of ill-humour Bob's father threw the entire batch of letters into the fire.

As usual, when perturbed in mind, "mother" turned the current of conversation by addressing Uncle Fred.

"I wish, when passing Janet Lisle's to-day, you would ask for our magazines."

All was hurry-scurry, as usual, three

or four hours later on in the post-office. A variety of small packages required immediate weighing; and it was at this very juncture that Uncle Fred placed his foot upon the threshold.

Something had, however, just caught his eye, and without more ado he beat a hasty retreat—not, however, to a great distance off.

"The very thing!" he ejaculated.

"There! We have been hunting about all this while—and to what purpose? 'Particulars within.' Eh? Why, I'll go in at once and inquire."

Uncle Fred was a widower, and had therefore made his home of late years with his sister Polly's family. Anything, he thought, was better than living alone.

He was rich, too, a highly cultivated man, with a peculiar faculty also for engaging in the performance of kindly actions. Like the rest of the family, however, he had only lately come into the neighborhood.

"Will you excuse my troubling you about the notice in the window?"

Elsie started visibly an instant. Yes, of course. This was not the first occasion upon which she had seen that certainly striking face. Yesterday, of course, when he had sent off the registered letter.

But Elsie was instantly all attention. Yes; she could tell him all he required to know—and did so; and even as she spoke, Elsie's eyes sparkled brightly and lovingly. She was doing now what it rejoiced her true woman's heart to venture upon—trying to help her favorite.

"And Miss Falconbridge thought that the young lady in question might be fully relied upon in her guidance of little children?" he asked.

"Oh, dear me! Yes, most certainly. You can give me her address?"

Elsie noted it down quickly upon a slip of paper.

Before the end of that certainly eventful day, Miss Josephine was engaged as daily governess in the family of Uncle Fred's sister, at the moderate salary of two hundred dollars a year.

Some months have passed away since then. Kind Uncle Fred, that he ever is, has just appeared in the large, old-fashioned hall, and is assisting "Miss Josephine" in putting on her cloak previous to taking her departure for home. He, and "Sister Polly" also, are both made of good stuff, and folks say, and—Heaven bless them for it!—only wish to make her feel at home with them.

As he says, the evening is so lovely, and the balmy outdoor air will do him good. She is telling him—why, she does not exactly know—something about their troubles at home since "dear father" died.

"In fact, you know," went on "Miss Josephine," quite simply, "he had not even a penny left in the house. It was too dreadful, sir."

She paused a moment; then went on, in the least degree nervously.

"Shall I tell you what I did?"

"Yes."

"I advertised, then, in a country paper—don't be shocked, please. At any rate, I did it for the best—whether right or wrong, I don't quite know."

"Go on."

"I merely said, then, that a widow and her daughters—all born to better things, as it seemed—were suddenly thrown into the lowest depths of poverty—and asked for help."

Uncle Fred gave a sort of slight nervous start at this moment, but "Miss Josephine" did not take notice of it. She was thinking only at that instant of the terrible struggle which had urged her to take such a step as that which she was now describing.

"And the result?" he asked, quietly.

"What was it?"

"No answer came," she returned, gravely, but earnestly. "Possibly those who read the words did not believe in their truth; or possibly some did so who were not in a position to aid us."

"I see," and Uncle Fred spoke now, as if dreamily. "There! I must leave you, Miss Josephine. Very sorry for it—very sorry indeed. Have just suddenly remembered something. You'll excuse my running away thus abruptly; won't you? Will be a trifle more courteous next time. Horribly heated of the people; wasn't it, Miss Josephine?" And thus talking glibly—as if, too, he did not exactly know

what he was saying—Uncle Fred lifted his hat and disappeared.

The following Thursday morning just as "Miss Josephine" was starting for her usual daily occupation, a letter was placed in her hand by the postman: after reading which, that young lady marched deliberately upstairs again, removed her hat and cloak, chased away with a pocket handkerchief a great many tears that for some reason or other would insist upon pouring down her cheeks, and then set to work to re-read the following words:

"DEAR MISS JOSEPHINE: Pardon my abrupt leave-taking yesterday; but I will now explain. Returning home expressly by the way of the post-office, I did a small stroke of business there on my own account."

"Miss Elsie Falconbridge was out, having gone to spend the evening with the widowed, and alas! now childless mother, of her once, and so lately too sailor lover. We have, however, already spoken together—you and I—of this unlooked-for event, and also of the brave way in which Miss Elsie bears the heavy blow."

"But I would now speak of something else—so selfish as we all in this world, you see. I persuaded the good dame, Janet Leslie, to assist me in something, which was puzzling me not a little."

"I heard last evening for the first time, of course—and also from your own lips, most strange to say—that a twenty-dollar-note, which I had sent you in answer to your advertisement asking for aid, never reached you. It had, I now find, miscarried in ordinary way that letters do occasionally go astray; but it was as impossible, you will presently see, that it should ever have reached your abode, as the residence of one of the ancient patriarchs."

"The letter containing the amount named was, it appears, although placed in a registered envelope for which I duly paid never despatched; and in the hurry-scurry of the moment it never entered, either, in the official book. The salt was, of course, my own, quite as much as that of any one else; but every one was asking hurried questions at the moment, and my letter—yours rather—paid the penalty. Then, as fate would have it, it landed itself otherwise than in the legitimate post bag, and dropped, how is best known to itself, behind a drawer that is rarely opened."

"Forgive the details, however. Janet Leslie had only discovered the thus hidden-away missive half an hour before I appeared upon the scene—mark the coincidence—and was in a state of no little consternation."

"Picture also my own dismay."

"The mystery, however, is now solved."

"I will not again tender the amount for your acceptance, as there certainly seems to be something unfortunate attending its career—beside which, on my part, I am going to ask a favor from yourself."

"Will you, I ask, become my wife—and also kindly acknowledge promptly the receipt of this letter, or I shall be compelled to take it for granted that my second communication has shared the fate of the first."

UNCLE FRED.

"Miss Josephine," like a wise woman, answered the letter just received by the return of post.

The years have flown since then, and matters go on much as usual in that small township of Lamerton.

But there are changes, nevertheless. Janet Leslie knows her place no more in the cozy little postoffice. She has already gone home long since to rest and sweet Elsie Falconbridge is now mistress of everything.

Her hair, however, though still beautiful, is in these days white—white as the driven snow; and the abiding expression upon her still handsome face is that of one who has passed through a mighty and also terrible sea of trouble, and borne the trial only as a true heroine could.

She knows, she says, that God had ordered all, and that she shall see her sailor lover again one day in heaven.

But there is still one person in the world whom she loves dearly, and that is the happy, true-hearted wife of "Uncle Fred."

"I owe all—every bit, in fact—of my happiness to you, sweetest Elsie," as Josephine says. "It dates from the day—don't you remember?—when you gave me muffins and crumpets."

"And also dispatched my registered letter so carefully," remarks Uncle Fred, quaintly.—Frank Leslie's

Old Cassius M. Clay desires to be the Republican candidate for Governor of Kentucky, and has announced himself as in the field. Brilliant, erratic, bitter and unwise, he would make a sorry official if elected.

The Springfield (Mass.) Republican says the woman suffrage question has come to stay. Yes, and we hope it will torment the advocates of it in this world.

PETER W. SPOOKS.

(Communicated.)  
**COUNTERFEIT CHRISTIANITY.**

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