

The Orphans' Friend.

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From the Companion.
MY LITTLE SCHOOL-GIRL.

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The first time that I saw her was one autumn morning as I rode to town in a horse-car. It was early, and my only fellow-passenger was a crusty old gentleman, who sat in a corner, reading his paper; so when the car stopped, I glanced out to see who came next, hoping it would be a pleasanter person. No one appeared for a minute, and the car stood still, while both driver and conductor looked in the same direction without a sign of impatience. I looked also, but all I could see was a little girl running across the park, as girls of twelve or thirteen seldom run now-days, if any one can see them.

'Are you waiting for her?' I asked of the pleasant-faced conductor, who stood with his hand on the bell, and a good-natured smile in his eyes.

'Yes, ma'am, we always stop for little missy,' he answered; and just then up she came, all rosy and breathless with her run.

'Thank you very much. I'm late to-day, and was afraid I should miss my car,' she said, as he helped her in with a fatherly air that was pleasant to see.

Taking a corner seat, she smoothed the curly locks, disturbed by the wind, put on her gloves, and settled her books in her lap, then modestly glanced from the old gentleman in the opposite corner to the lady near by. Such a bright little face as I saw under the brown hat-rim, happy blue eyes, dimples in the ruddy cheeks, and the innocent expression which makes a young girl so sweet an object to old eyes!

The crusty gentleman evidently agreed with me, for he peeped over the top of the paper at his pleasant little neighbor as she sat studying a lesson, and cheering herself with occasional sniffs at a posy of mignonette and sweet peas.

When the old gentleman caught my eye, he dived out of sight with a loud 'Hem!' but he was peeping again directly, for there was something irresistibly attractive about the unconscious lassie opposite; and one could no more help looking at her than at a lovely flower or a playful kitten.

Presently she shut her book with a decided pat, and an air of relief that amused me. She saw the half smile I could not repress, seemed to understand my sympathy, and said with a laugh,

'It was a hard lesson, but I've got it!'

So we began to talk about school and lessons, and I soon discovered that the girl was a clever scholar, whose only drawback was, as she confided to me, a 'love of fun.'

We were just getting quite friendly, when several young men got in, one of whom stared at the pretty child till even she observed it, and showed that she did by the color that came and went in her cheeks. It annoyed me as much as if she had been my own little daughter, for I like modesty, and have often been troubled by the forward manners of school-girls, who seemed to enjoy being

looked at. So I helped this one out of her little trouble by making room between the old gentleman and myself, and motioning her to come and sit there.

She understood at once, thanked me with a look, and nestled into the safe place so gratefully, that the old gentleman glared over his spectacles at the rude person who had disturbed the serenity of the child.

Then we rumbled along again, the car getting fuller and fuller as we got down town. Presently an Irish woman, with a baby, got in, and before I could offer my seat, my little school-girl was out of hers, with a polite,—

'Please take it, ma'am, I can stand perfectly well!'

It was prettily done, and I valued the small courtesy all the more, because it evidently cost the bashful creature an effort to stand up alone in a car full of strangers; especially as she could not reach the strap to steady herself, and found it difficult to stand comfortably.

Then it was that the crusty man showed how he appreciated my girl's good manners, for he hooked his cane in the strap, and gave it to her, saying, with a smile that lighted up his rough face like sunshine,—

'Hold on to that, my dear!'

'Ah, thought I, how little we can judge from appearances. This grim old soul is a gentleman, after all!'

Turning her face towards us, the girl held on to the stout cane, and swayed easily to and fro as we bumped over the rails. The Irish woman's baby, a sickly little thing, was attracted by the flowers, and put out a small hand to touch them, with a wistful look at the bright face above.

'Will baby have some?' said my girl, and made the little creature happy with a gay sweet pea and some red leaves.

'Bless your heart, honey, it's fond he is of the like o' them, and seldom he gets any,' said the mother, gratefully, as she settled baby's dirty hood, and wrapped the old shawl round his feet.

Baby stared hard at the giver of posies, but his honest blue eyes gave no offence, and soon the two were so friendly that baby boldly clutched at the bright buttons on her sack, and crowded with delight when he got one, while we all smiled at the pretty play, and were sorry when the little lady, with a bow and a smile to us, got out at the church corner.

'Now I shall probably never see that child again, yet what a pleasant picture she leaves in my memory,' I thought to myself, as I caught a last glimpse of the brown hat, going round the corner.

But I did see her again many times that winter, for not long after, as I passed down a certain street near my winter quarters, I came upon a flock of girls, eating their luncheon as they walked to and fro on the sunny side,—pretty, merry creatures, all laughing and chattering at once, as they tossed apples from hand to hand, munched candy, or compared cookies. I went slowly, to enjoy the sight, as I do when I meet a

party of sparrows on the Common, and was wondering what would become of so many budding women, when, all of a sudden, I saw my little school-girl.

Yes, I knew her in a minute, for she wore the same brown hat, and the rosy face was sparkling with fun, as she told secrets with a chosen friend, while eating a wholesome slice of bread and butter as only a hungry school-girl could.

She did not recognize me, but I took a good look at her as I went by, longing to know what the particular secret was that ended in such a gale of laughter.

After that, I often saw my girl as I took my walks abroad, and one day could not resist speaking to her when I met her alone, for usually her mates clustered round her like bees about their queen, which pleased me, since it showed how much they loved the sunshiny child.

I had a paper of grapes in my hand, and when I saw her coming, whisked out a handsome bunch all ready to offer, for I had made up my mind to speak this time. She was reading a paper, but looked up to give me the inside of the walk.

Before her eyes could fall again, I held out the grapes and said, just as I had heard her say more than once to a schoolmate at lunch-time, 'Let's go halves!'

She understood at once, laughed, and took the bunch, saying, with twinkling eyes,—

'O thank you! they are beauties!'

Then, as we went on to the corner together, I told her why I did it, and recalled the car-ride.

'I'd forgotten all about that, but my conductor is very kind, and always waits for me,' she said, evidently surprised that a stranger should take an interest in her small self.

I did not have half time enough with her, for a bell rang, and away she skipped, looking back to nod and smile at the queer lady who had taken a fancy to her.

A few days afterward a fine nosegay of flowers was left at the door for me, and when I asked the servant who sent them, he answered,—

'A little girl asked if a lame lady didn't live here, and when I said yes, she told me to give you these, and say, "The grapes were very nice."'

I knew at once who it was, and enjoyed the funny message immensely, for when one leads a quiet life, little things interest and amuse.

Christmas was close by, and I planned a return for the flowers, of a sort that I fancied my young friend would appreciate.

I know that Christmas week would be a holiday, so the day before it began, I went to the school just before recess, and left a frosted, plummy cake, directed to 'Miss Goldlocks, from she knows who.'

At first I did not know how to address my nice, white parcel, for I never had heard the child's name. But after thinking over the matter, I remembered that she was the only girl there with yellow curls hanging down her back, so I decided to risk the cake

with the above direction.

The maid who took it in (for my girl went to a private school) smiled, and said at once she knew who I meant. I left my cake and strolled round the corner to the house of a friend, there to wait and watch for the success of my joke, for the girls always went that way at recess.

Presently the little hats began to go bobbing by, the silent street to echo with laughter, and the sidewalk to bloom with gay gowns, for the girls were all out in winter colors now.

From behind a curtain I peeped at them, and saw, with great satisfaction, that nearly all had bits of my cake in their hands, and were talking it over with the most flattering interest. My particular little girl, with a friend on each arm, passed so near me that I could see the happy look in her eyes, and hear her say, with a toss of the bright hair,—

'Mother will plan it for me, and I can get it done by New Year. Won't it be fun to hang it on the door some day, and then run?'

I fancied that she meant to make something for me, and waited with patience, wondering how this odd frolic with my little school-girl would end.

New Year's Day came and passed, but no gift hung on my door; so I made up my mind it was all a mistake, and being pretty busy about that time, thought no more of the matter till some weeks later, as I came into town one day after a visit in the country.

I am fond of observing faces, and seldom forget one if anything has particularly attracted my attention to it. So this morning, as I rode along, I looked at the conductor, as there was no one else to observe, and he had a pleasant sort of face. Somehow, it looked familiar, and after thinking idly about it for a minute, I remembered where I had seen it before.

He was the man who waited for 'little missy,' and I at once began to hope that she would come again, for I wanted to ask about the holidays, remembering how 'fond of fun' she was.

When we came to the South End Square, where I met her first, I looked out, expecting to see the little figure running down the wide path again, and quite willing to wait for it a long time if necessary. But no one was to be seen but two boys and a dog. The car did not stop, and though the conductor looked out that way, his hand was not on the strap, and no smile on his face.

'Don't you wait for the little girl now?' I asked, feeling disappointed at not seeing my pretty friend again.

'I wish I could, ma'am,' answered the man, understanding at once, though of course he did not remember me.

'New rules, perhaps?' I added, as he did not explain, but stood fingering his punch, and never minding an old lady, wildly waving her bag at him from the sidewalk.

'No, ma'am; but it's no use waiting for little missy any more, because—here he leaned in and said very low,—'she is dead;'

then turned sharply round, rung the bell, put the old lady in and shut the door.

How grieved I was to have that pleasant friendship end so sadly, for I had planned many small surprises for my girl, and now I could do no more, could never know all about her, never see the sunny face again, or win another word from lips that seemed made for smiling.

Only a little school girl, yet how many friends she seemed to have, making them unconsciously by her gentle manners, generous actions, and innocent light-heartedness. I could not bear to think what home must be without her, for I am sure I was right in believing her a good, sweet child, because real character shows itself in little things, and the heart that always keeps in tune makes its music heard everywhere.

The busy man of the horse-car found time to miss her, the school-mates evidently mourned their queen, for when I met them they walked quietly, talked low, and several wore black bows upon the sleeve; while I, although I never knew her name, or felt a single fact about her, felt the sweetness of her happy nature, and have not yet forgotten my little school-girl.

Too Much Instinct.

The London *Graphic* gives an amusing account of a man who wasn't rescued from drowning by two dogs:

The instinct of Newfoundland dogs to save a drowning person has been somewhat painfully tested by an unlucky Frenchman. He was walking in the country with a friend, who possessed a magnificent Newfoundland, and incautiously questioned the truth of the animal's sagacity. The dog's master, vexed at the slur cast on his favorite, gave his friend a push, and knocked him into a shallow river. 'Turk' immediately sprang in, and seizing one of the tails of the immersed man's coat commenced to swim for land. Unfortunately, another Newfoundland trotting along the other side of the river, saw the affair, and also came to the rescue. Dog number two seized the other tail of the coat, and wished to swim back to his master. Turk held fast and struggled for his side, and the owner of the coat cried in vain for help. At last the coat gave way, and each Newfoundland swam proudly home with a piece of cloth in his mouth, so that Turk's master was obliged to plunge in himself to save his friend.

A few days ago, the ponderous machinery of the Patterson cotton-factory came to a sudden and unaccountable halt. The water was drawn off and a search made when lo, a monster eel was found entangled in the turbine wheel. 40 looms and 4,000 spindles stopped by a single eel. That sounds like an eel-aborate fish-story, but it's vouched for by good citizens with pluzzes of eel-ongated solemnity.—*Raleigh Sentinel*.

He is alone wise who can accommodate himself to all the contingencies of life.