The Acton Free P

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Story.

THE ONLY WAY TO WIN

It takes a deal of courage
And a little self control—
And some grim determination
If you want to reach a goal.

It takes a deal of striving
And a trim and stern set chin,
No matter what the battle
If you're really out to win.

There's no easy path to glory;
There's no rosy road to fame;
Life, however we may view it,
Is no simple parlour game.

But its prizes call for fighting,
For endurance and for grit,
For a ragged disposition
And a "don't-know-when-to-quit."

You must take a blow or give one,
You must risk and you must lose,
And expect that it's a struggle
You will suffer from a bruise.

But you mustn't whine or falter
If a fight you once begin;
Be a man and face the battle—
That's the only way to win.

Select Family Reading

Sylvia and the Old Musician

SYLVIA entered her small, but neat room in the tenement long past the hour which served as well for a public, and most days also the only meal of the day. For she was employed in the making of artificial flowers, and spent the greater part of her working hours in the garden of a large house in the suburbs of the great city.

Sylvia was a large brunette, with regular and handsome features, a fine figure, and her face, clear and sunburned, was a remarkable contrast to the pallor of her own people, the work-girls of the city. As she stood there, with her hands clasped behind her head, and her eyes fixed on the ceiling, she looked very handsome, but very sad.

"Oh, I have so much to learn," she said, "and I am so ignorant. I wish I knew more about people, and how to talk to them. I wish I had been brought up in a home like that of Mrs. Mueller, and had friends like her husband and herself. I wish I knew what to do with myself. I am so lonely, and I am so tired of working for others. I wish I had some one to work for me, and some one to love me. I wish I had a home, and a husband, and children. I wish I had a—"

Sylvia's soliloquy was interrupted by a knock at the door, and on opening it she found Mrs. Mueller standing there, with a plate of smoking hot cakes in her hand.

"I thought you would like some of my cakes, Sylvia," she said, "and I wanted to see you about something. Can you spare me a few minutes?"

"Yes, indeed I can," said Sylvia, with a sigh of relief, for she was glad of any excuse to escape from her own thoughts.

"Then I will sit down," said Mrs. Mueller, "for I have been standing all day, and I am very tired. Now, Sylvia, I have been thinking about you a great deal lately, and I have come to the conclusion that you are working too hard, and living too lonely a life. You must have a change, and I have come to ask you if you will not come and stay with us for a few weeks. We have a nice little room that you can have all to yourself, and we should be very glad to have you with us. Will you come?"

Sylvia looked at the speaker in astonishment. Was it possible that this kind woman really meant what she said? Was it possible that she was to be taken into the Mueller home, and treated as a friend and guest? Sylvia could not speak for a moment, so much did the thought overcome her, but at last she managed to say, in a voice broken with emotion:

"Oh, Mrs. Mueller, how much it means to me that you should ask me to come to your home! I am very glad indeed that you have asked me, and I will come with pleasure."

Two days later Sylvia found herself in the Mueller home, and before she had been there long she realized that she had found friends indeed. Mrs. Mueller with her motherly sympathy soon drew from the girl her story of her lonely life, and of her struggles to support herself, and Mr. Mueller, who was a musician of no mean ability, and who had formerly played in one of the leading orchestras of the city, was interested in the girl's love of music, and in the account she gave of her own attempts to learn to play the violin.

"Ah, you are brave. You have the true musician's spirit," Mrs. Mueller cried in her whole hearted way. "So many, many times has my husband said: 'Ah, if only those who stands beside me knew or cared to try.' That is the only way."

"But have we then found so nice a neighbor only to lose her?" Mr. Mueller asked.

"I, too, was thinking of that, Karl," Mrs. Mueller said, nodding her head. She turned to Sylvia: "Dearest, you come to us if you need change—room? We have a small room—not the guest chamber, Mr. Mueller must have for his musician friends—but a little room our son Heinz had when he went to live in Texas, and if you think you could stay it we shall be glad to have you. Is it not so, Karl?"

"Very glad," Mr. Mueller agreed heartily.

For a moment Sylvia could not speak. To go and live with these dear, kind people! It was like the beautiful unreal dream of a fairy tale, and at home, and every day, such good fortune?

"Perhaps the room is too small, Mrs. Mueller," apologetically, but Sylvia recovered herself.

"No, indeed, how much it means that you should ask me! I shall be very glad to come, and I thank you very much for your kindness."

"That's later Sylvia came to live with the Mueller home, and whose every day she found some pleasure, to amount of the [illegible] which she was [illegible] Mrs. Mueller with her motherly sympathy and [illegible] Mr. Mueller with his [illegible] Sylvia [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]