

## A Bunch of Violets

Mrs. Van Bleek descended the broad stair-case of her beautiful home, slowly drawing on her gloves. Lightly tripping down after her came her young niece.

"I'm ready, auntie," said she, "and I think John is waiting at the door."

"John," said Mrs. Van Bleek almost sharply; "I am going to walk to church."

"Pardon me, auntie, it is my fault, I see; John asked me an hour ago, 'is mistress going to church?' and I answered 'yes,' he must have taken my answer as an order for the carriage."

Mrs. Van Bleek had set apart that hour for preparation for the early Communion, and a part of that preparation was to be a leisurely walk to the church. It irritated her to find in so small a thing one of her plans frustrated, but with a sweet change of manner she said, "We will ride, Gertrude—I wanted to walk, and I knew you wouldn't mind; but come, now, dear."

At that instant a door at the end of the hall opened, and a child's voice called; "Mamma! Oh, please, mamma wait! Won't you wear my flowers?"

A look of surprise was on Mrs. Van Bleek's face when she saw her little lame daughter hurrying towards her on her crutches with a bunch of sweet violets in her hand. She sat down and lifted her into her lap, pressed the brown ringlets back from the delicate face, and kissed her softly. "Mary my child!" was all she said.

"I couldn't sleep, mamma, and Estelle let me get up and be dressed. I knew you were going to church; and see, I have been into the green house with Estelle to get these for you to wear, my precious mamma!"

Her little fingers were fastening them on the sealskin garment, and she was saying, "Aren't you glad my flowers can go to church though I cannot?"

The drive to the church was in silence. Gertrude knew well that pain of heart was betrayed by the pallor of her aunt's face. The mother's poor heart! The hour's struggle for a fitting frame to come to this Holy Communion, and then, a moment of childishly weak vexation, a sting of painful rebellion against God's will caused by the unexpected meeting with her crippled child. She had tried so hard to put out of her mind what the physician had said the day before, but how, over and over the words said themselves in her mind. "It is incurable; there is no other alternative than early death, or years of painful treatment."

She set her lips tightly and crushed her hands together in her muff, and sat in silence. At the church door she got out of the carriage without a glance behind her, went with haste into the church, and letting her niece go into one pew, purposely chose another for herself, fell on her knees and cried out her agony with bitter tears; strength the "heavenly benediction" of the Blessed Sacrament was hers. Her soul seemed uplifted to endure for Him who bore for her His soul-pain.

Outside John was arranging the fur robes of the carriage, taking out each one and shaking it, for he had plenty of time and little to do. He did not see that one long-stemmed purple violet was shaken from the robe on to the stone walk. He did not see that a little boy in rags greedily snatched the flower as it fell, running as if afraid of pursuit, around the corner. He did not see. What was a violet left on a cold pavement? What was a ragged boy with freezing bare feet? What, to a respectable coachman like John? So John arranged and then rearranged the rich, warm furs, and waited. The boy's winged feet sped; by his alley-route he had not far to go to reach a tumbling wooden block and a basement room.

At the head of the alley, Sammy, his boon friend saluted him; "I say! a posy! give us one! Do Jim!"

"Give us one—don't yer see as one's all I got; and then more gently, 'this un's for Susie.' Even Sammy yielded to that argument, and added only: "But tell a feller where yer got the posy, Jim."

"Up to the church, on the avenue. Some lady dropped it out ter her button-hole, I reckon."

Down the icy, rickety steps went Jim into the miserably room. He paused for a second as if to accustom his eyes to the gloom, then said softly to himself, "Ma not home yet, Susie not awake, neither; and after laying the flower on the couch, went swiftly up the steps and out again.

"Ma ain't home yet. There warn't no supper last night, and Susie must have something to eat, somehow."

These words were to Sammy whom he had overtaken.

day to find breakfast; but chips—"My boots, Jim—the posies!" and animated by one impulse they dashed towards the carriage.

"Lady, give me a posy—please, ma'am!" said Sammy.

The elder lady did not hear the pleading voice; Gertrude, with a smile like a summer morning, took the bunch of roses from her own coat, divided them into the hands of the two children, and got into the carriage after her aunt.

An hour later Mrs. Van Bleek was again descending the staircase into the handsome hall; she had been on her knees in wordless prayer; her beautiful face had lost its sternness and its sadness was softened with the new peace gained at the Blessed Sacrament. There came a peculiar sort of rap at the hall door, like a child pounding with strong fists.

At the same time a ringing of the bell. She was so near the door she opened it herself. What a descent from the Mount of Transfiguration to the common life of earth!

Within the vestibule stood two boys in rags and dirt, one bare-headed, holding a rose in his dirty hands. The other, with yellow hair, great blue eyes. "We want to see the lady," said he. "But that ain't my lady," exclaimed the bare-headed boy; "we want the pretty lady."

"Gertrude, is this one of your admirers?" asked Mrs. Van Bleek, beckoning Gertrude to the door. "Her's the one," shouted Jim.

"Yes, tell her," prompted Sammy. But little Jim was suddenly overcome with shyness. Fortunately for both, Sammy was brave enough to state, "Him wants something to eat for Susie, and some chips."

"Who is Susie?" inquired Gertrude, gently. "Auntie, could they go around to the kitchen? they are shaking with cold, and must have some breakfast."

"Come this way, little boys," was the kind answer; and with careful steps and dazed eyes, they followed the ladies.

Again little Mary came through the hall, moving wearily with her crutch, and Jim, in a loud whisper, said to Sammy, "Do you think Susie could walk on one o' them things?"

It was the mother's ear that heard this time. "Is Susie—lame?" she asked with quivering lips.

"She can't walk none—lies abed, ma'am."

"Oh, mamma!" exclaimed little Mary as if the thought of it were as a keen pain to her.

"Won't you go into the dining room pet, and mamma will come directly to breakfast—and yes, I will tell you more about Susie when I come."

Down in the kitchen she went; ordered a warm breakfast for the two boys, and another to be packed for them to carry; also a basket of coal. "I will come to-morrow to see your sister, little boys," she said.

"Jim's sister, ma'am, I'm only his pard," ventured Sammy.

Mrs. Van Bleek smiled, and her heart was full of pity as she sent them away.

"It may be all a humbug, Gertrude," she said afterwards, "but they are such little fellows! And oh, Gertrude! it may be I am doing for Mary's sake instead of the Master's, but the thought of that lame Susie makes my heart ache."

Gertrude answered: "No, no, auntie dear, blue eyes as honest as those can be trusted."

The following day, early, they set out, and with many difficulties found the "Barn Block," which proved to be the Brown Block.

Jim was on the crazy steps, evidently waiting. A delighted grin was his welcome, as he went down the steps and pushed open the door into the room. How dark it seemed! Gertrude hung back, the cellar odor almost choking her, but in a moment she followed her aunt who was daintily stepping over the muddy pool that the melting ice on the steps was sending into the basement room. What need to describe the place! In that great city there are hundreds like it; and oh! that the angel of pity might enter each one as it surely that morning visited these! In a corner, under a small window, lay Susie on her couch. The only sunshine that would enter during the whole day was just lying across the quilt.

"My poor little girl," Mrs. Van Bleek said softly as she came close to her.

"Are these Jim's ladies?" was the reply in a cheery voice. "Can you sit down, ma'am? Jim, is the chair clean?" Susie raised herself on her elbow, and a faint color came into her thin face.

"The chair"—there was really only one; that was the mother's. Susie never needed one, and Jim—the floor was good enough for him. A box that Sammy had brought in was used for fuel the day before. Susie's wretched bed was the only other resting place, therefore Gertrude stood. "How did you find us yesterday, Jim?" she asked.

"Sammy an' me runned after the kerriage, ma'am. 'Twas Sammy what wanted to go and ax you for something for Susie to eat. But I daren't."

Meantime, Mrs. Van Bleek had learned all Susie's sad story. As a little child she had walked—that is, hobbled about—then the father, an honest bricklayer, died—their mother drank, and drank oftener after father died; and once Susie was very ill—that was two years ago, and she had never walked a step since. She was eight years old now, she guessed.

Their mother had been gone now two days and three nights. Dear little Jim was so good, but what could such a little fellow do, except to pat her face and say, "I love you, Susie?" And there on the window sill, in a cracked cup, were the roses and the one violet. But they had brought to-day a large bunch of violets and Susie's nose was buried in their sweet depths as she talked—a warm blanket too, which they made the children eat immediately. They missed Jim a moment, and when he returned Sammy was with him.

"Gertrude," said Mrs. Van Bleek, "there certainly is work remaining which must be done by the individual

Christian. The Associated Charities no doubt make spasmodic attempts here. The W.C.T.U. leave their tracts here, and the drunken mother lights the fire with them. From all that Susie tells me I judge that the "Gold Cure" has had the mother for a patient. A 'Methodist Benevolent Society' sends clothing—most of which goes for drink. What is needed is the persistent work of one person, devoting time and money especially time, to a case like this. Thank God, I have the money, I will find the time."

Afterwards in her home, with her precious little daughter, just Jim's age in her lap, she told as much about her visit as it seemed best to pour into such ears.

Mary's eyes overflowed with tears; "Lame, just like me! but she can't walk? Has to lie in bed, and hasn't any mamma, like my mamma?" Then, as if a new thought seized her, "Can't you be Susie's mamma, too? You know just how to be a mamma."

"My precious child!" said Mrs. Van Bleek folding Mary more closely in her arms.

"And Jim's and Sammy's mamma as well?—Yes, what fun," laughed little Mary, merrily.

In exactly what way Mrs. Van Bleek kept her unspoken promise to be a mother to these poor children, along story only would tell, but in part the story must be told.

Susie's needs appealed to her inmost heart—Susie first must be helped.

The specialist whom Mrs. Van Bleek had consulted for her own Mary was persuaded to take this pitiable little Susie's case. The drunken mother was placed in a house of reformation. The little boys were admitted to a Church home, and Susie, a happy, patient sufferer, lay in a hospital cot all the winter and spring days.

Three times a week Mrs. Van Bleek made the child a visit—and such varied visits! She read to her, sang to her, taught her Church hymns, told stories drew and painted pictures for her, brought kindergarten playthings for her, but first of all gifts was a beautiful baby doll from Mary, just the right size to cuddle in her arms at night. The dearest thing she could do for Susie was to tell her all the smallest trifles about Mary.

"What dress did Mary have on today? Has she walked downstairs with her crutch today? What kind of flowers did Mary pick in the greenhouse before breakfast? Which Dolly did Mary play with her baby 'Sweetie,' or her lady-doll, 'Elise'?"

Patiently and cheerfully Mrs. Van Bleek answered all the childish questions, sometimes holding the small white hand in hers, and always admiring the delicate-featured face, that was daily growing prettier. And all the time Mrs. Van Bleek's care enfolded this little one. Each time when she came the nurses were given special instructions to omit nothing that money could supply for the comfort of this child.

Meanwhile, many so-called duties—social duties—were omitted or deferred by Mrs. Van Bleek. Society said, "Strange that she should shut herself in so much with her little daughter."

"Yes, she is a sweet child, and it is a terrible affliction that she is a cripple, but then, since the disease is really incurable, Mrs. Van Bleek will have years of care—and, yes, how much better for her not to shut herself in so, and brood over her trouble."

Not one person knew that the "work for the individual Christian" which she had set her heart and hands to do was that which made it necessary for her to withdraw from the social life where after all, she was not needed. And so the winter days were divided between these two dear children.

Many, many times, during the winter she had regretfully said no to Mary's entreaty to take her to see Susie, and each time it had been almost as hard to disappoint Susie with "No, I couldn't let my darling come today," therefore it was early spring, a day all blue and green and golden, when little Mary was carefully placed in the luxurious carriage and driven very slowly to the hospital.

It could not be anything but a happy moment when Mrs. Van Bleek saw the shy pleasure in the faces of the two little girls brought together at last; but the next brought a pang of pain that froze her heart. At one glance she saw how well and full of health Susie was growing—and, alas! alas! how fragile a flower her own Mary was.

It was then that her heart first knew its coming grief. She went quickly into an adjoining room. "See—see, there is my darling—and, look at Susie! God forgive me!" Down went her head on the shoulder of the sympathetic nurse, and passionate weeping relieved a little of her anguish.

When she returned to them the little girls were laughing and chatting about the playthings and flowers Mary had brought.

"I wish I had nice crutches like yours," said Susie.

"Praps you will have," said Mary. "And maybe they'll let you stay in this bu'f' hospital sometimes," added Susie, "and Mary, I love your mamma so!"

"Course you do," answered Mary. There were very few more visits exchanged, then followed weeks when Mrs. Van Bleek's visits to the hospital had to be substituted by Gertrude's, and then there were long, long weeks when she never went; fortunately at that time Susie was so greatly improved that the physician permitted her twice to ride to Mrs. Van Bleek's home.

Once only, and for a brief time, she saw Mary, then a wan little sufferer on the bed from which she never rose again to health.

The end came when the leaves were crimson and golden. Mary was taken to Paradise. Susie lived here many years, and her life was to the end a blessing to many others. Mrs. Van Bleek gave that portion which would have been her daughter's, had she lived, to found a "child's hospital" where treatment should be especially provided for all spinal diseases. In due time St. Mary's Hospital was erected. "To the glory of God, and in loving memory of Mary Van Bleek."

## About the House.

### DAINTY DISHES FOR INVALIDS.

If ever attention is necessary in preparing food, surely it is most needed in the preparation of food for those who are in ill-health and suffering from the capriciousness of appetite that is almost inseparable from it. Upon those who prepare the meals of an invalid it cannot be too strongly urged, that cleanliness, daintiness and promptitude in serving, are absolutely indispensable. The first two items carefully observed, will insure the interest of the patient, the last will render the food wholesome; for all dishes should be served as soon as ready—hot dishes thoroughly hot and iced ones when completely iced.

As a rule an invalid's appetite has to be tempted. It is not a wise plan to constantly bother the patient regarding his bill of fare. By a little tact and adroit questioning, favorite dishes can easily be discovered, and an invalid often be surprised into taking a fair amount of nourishment by finding some tempting morsel unexpectedly placed before him; whereas, if questioned immediately beforehand he would in all probability have declared he "was not hungry and did not care for anything."

As so much sickness is rife during this time of the year, we will give a few recipes for invalid dishes, with the hope that they may suggest something new to those in charge of the sick ones of their homes.

**Iceland Moss Jelly.**—Wash about two ounces of the moss in cold water, then place it in three pints of cold water, and boil this gently over the fire until about a third of the liquid has evaporated. Strain it upon removal from the fire, and allow it to thoroughly set before serving. A teaspoonful of this is the most strengthening jelly that an invalid can take.

**Chicken for an Invalid.**—Have a nice cutlet, cut thinly, from a loin of mutton, remove all fat from it, and put in to a stew-pan with two teaspoonfuls of water, a very small cut-up stick of celery, and pepper and salt to taste. Let the cutlet simmer very gently for nearly two hours, and be careful to remove all fat that may rise to the surface as the meat cooks. The water must boil gently, otherwise the meat will not become sufficiently tender to suit the sick person's digestion.

**Beef Essence with Cream.**—Cut up a pound of lean steak and pound each portion with the flat of a silver spoon upon a dish, so that the juice may be extracted. Then mix a tablespoonful of the meat fluid with a teaspoonful of fresh cream and a flavoring of salt or sugar, according to the taste of the patient. Give a teaspoonful of this mixture every hour or so. It is extremely nourishing, but must be made fresh every day.

**To Cook Fish for an Invalid.**—Select a small, quite fresh whitefish; clean it, and place it in a fruit jar with a tablespoonful of milk and a sprig of parsley. Close the jar completely, and let it remain in a saucepan of boiling water for half an hour. Serve upon a small dish, with a pretty garnish of freshly washed parsley.

**Sago Milk.**—Soak three tablespoonfuls of sago in a cup of cold water for about an hour; add three cups of boiling milk, sweeten slightly, and simmer slowly for another half hour. Serve warm with a slight flavoring of nutmeg, if it is not distasteful to the patient.

### VARIOUS PLANT FOODS.

An easy way of supplying house plants with leaf mould is to take the yellow leaves and useless seed vessels that are plucked from the plant, roll them in little wads and thrust them down into the soil, there to decay and supply nutriment. But this cannot be done with all plants, especially those which are grown in small pots.

For instance the fuchsia is a complete mat of roots which often lick the sides of the pot, and are apparently tempted to try the upper air, but it thrives and flourishes well even if its feet are pinched. Of course, if the buds grow too slender or frail, or if the leaves turn yellow and drop, a larger crock must be granted it, but even in that case there will not long be room for much burying of wilted leaves, as small pots are the rule for that plant.

For such cases other ways of assisting plant growth must be resorted to. A concentrated, neat and useful plant food comes in twenty-five-cent packages and the fuchsias respond to it readily. Odorous but equally efficacious stimulants can be supplied from the hen-roost and horse stable. Use with discretion, of course, especially upon plants of the bulbous rooted sort; Amaryllis Johnsonii will scarcely bear anything of the kind, but callias will profit by a generous amount.

Fuchsias, petunias, geraniums in small pots, heliotropes and abutilons are all heavy feeders.

Here is a double petunia with twenty-four blossoms, like little pink roses, and scores of buds on every side, that last summer was but three small slips in a four-inch pot. It has been pinched back and cut back, repotted and shortened many times since, and has now advanced to the root space afforded by a seven-inch pot.

A month ago it demanded more room, refusing to develop its many promised

buds unless something was done for it. What it received was a shaking up of the pot and a slice cut off its roots, then it was put back into the same crock, which was first thoroughly washed and scrubbed with an old brush.

Out of doors everything was stiff, and all the rich soil provided the fall for such uses had gone for other cases of need, but under the house was some fine dry manure, and the best that could be offered was petunia, which had also to be pressed of all its least promising branches, balance its loss of roots. The plant was not long in showing the effects of its overhauling. Now the number of blossoms open at any time is increasing, with no sign of any loss of fresh buds.

For house plants, it is a wise provision to stack up seeds and garden soil, give it two years' time to decompose, and use this ready-made plant food, small pots, to encourage compact and vigorous growth.

If you care to try the experiment, one season, place in a window one or two stocky little geraniums that have been well pinched back and kept in four or even three-inch pots, together with two tall geraniums in large pots. The small plants may be trusted to outblossom the tall ones, and easily pass them in foliage and general appearance.

### INEXPENSIVE KITCHEN CLOTHS.

Having never tried sugar sacks for dishcloths and dish towels, avail yourself of the opportunity to see them for two and one-half cents apiece, and thereby be convinced that nothing could be nicer for the purpose, as assuredly nothing less expensive. Every grocer has them in numbers. Supplies of granulated sugar are packed in one hundred pound sacks of thin muslin, such as is never to be found upon the shelves of the dry goods merchant. They take up the moisture from dishes rapidly, wash easily, and easily kept white, and wear well.

### TO CLEAN PIANO KEYS.

The white ivory keys of a piano should never be cleaned with water, which discolors them. Instead, they should be rubbed over with a soft flannel or piece of silk dipped in oxygenated water, which can be obtained at a chemist's and when the notes are stained or greasy use methylated spirit or gin or diluted whisky.

A simple way of cleaning ivory is as follows: Get some bicarbonate of soda and some hot water. Dip a brush in to the soda and rub the ivory with

### NEWSPAPERS FOR PLANTS.

During the cold nights, when plants are kept, stop the apertures about the window sash, if it be loose, with newspapers pressed into longitudinal folds the width of the cracks.

Place newspapers between the window and the plants.

For exceedingly low temperatures, cover the plants themselves with newspapers giving plenty of space for the spread of the leaves, and tie about the pots. The same papers may be used again and again.

### A POOR EXCUSE.

Bank Clerk (scrutinizing checks): Madame, we can't pay this unless you bring some one to identify you.

Old lady (tartly):—I should like to know why?

Bank Clerk—Because we don't know you.

### IMPOSSIBLE.

Pruyn—Have you heard that horrible story about old Stiffe being buried alive?

Dr. Bolus, hastily—Buried alive? Impossible! Why, he was one of my patients!

### JOHNNY'S HANDS.

Mother—Johnny, you said you'd be to Sunday school.

Johnny, with a far-away look—Yes'm.

Mother—How does it happen that your hands smell fishy?

Johnny—I carried home the day school paper, an'—an' th' outside page is all about Jonah an' th' whale!

### HOME REMEDIES.

When my wife gets a cold, I can cure it in a day.

What do you give her?

Nothing; I simply say that if she will by night I will take her to theatre.

### AN IMPORTANT POINT.

Hure, said Mrs. Perksie, as she glanced over the daily paper, in account of the arrest of a man stealing \$10.00 worth of diamonds. Genuine diamonds, asked Mr. Perksie, or did they belong to an actor?

### A DASTARDLY CRIME.

So the burglar carried off all the silver!

Yes, but what upset us the most was that he drank up all our cream, and we had none for our coffee at breakfast.

### AN ALASKAN FUNCTION.

Scrippner gave us a regular Eskimo party flat last night.

What were the features?

Cold storage atmosphere and much to eat.

### HAPPINESS AT LAST.

Belle—And so they were happily married!

Well—Yes; each of them married a body else.

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## Health Lost

### THE STORY OF A TRIAL

Was Growing Too Fast  
Gave Way—Severely  
Did Him No Good—  
Discouraged.

### From the Japanese

It is truly pitiable beginning to realize life stricken down escape from which thought to be little. Hearing of such a case on Mr. J. J. S. Fredericksburg Sta. and interviewed his cure of his son who and regained it by Williams' Pink Pills. The oldest resident direct U. E. Loyals resided all his life which he lives. It well known through in reply to the scribble details of the case, was taken sick February, 1895. He and had a dull cold. He grew weaker condition being more by the term weakness." He was were pain in the back, continuing weaker and finally He had little more a bit of white paper consulted on the fit the trouble. He d of the case stated hearing was affected deafness, the pains itating from muscular the constant tired weakness was caused. These difficulties t after effects of a grip sional wreck. He had careful medical att months. The doct treated him for the conted in restoring other respects was ordered that he sho nursed which was abo done. To make th understood I might sa his past twelve year grown very fast, w some six years his se said medicine could and all that could be by nursing. We natu discouraged at the pri what course to future. At this jun fragments of Napanoiously compounded Williams' Pink Pills, first of June when w some and commenced when he had finish appetite, previous steady, had wonder He continued taking seven boxes had h strength returned w and all signs of m gain had vanished an gained a strong health able to do considerable the harvest field su mow, reaper or hor time attended school through a year has el symptoms." Mrs. about the matter real that had been sal of his case, and was plows regarding the h sties contained in Pink Pills.

### Dr. Williams' Pink Pills

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