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#### TWO SHIPS.

Two girls in the kitchen of a plain, old fashioned house were busy sewing, the elder rapidly running a machine, the younger trimming a straw bat with odds and ends of ribbons, which she tried in yain to coax into

some appearance of freshness, "How does it look, Mattief" she asked anxiously, holding it off a little, and slowly

turning it around. Mattie looked up from her machine without stopping its quick motion, turned one comprehensive glance upon the hat, and said, impulsively, "Like a last year's bird's

"Oh, dear," said Dolly, flushing all over her pretty, worried face, and tossing the poor little hat into a corner. "What is the ise, anyway? We may as well give up and

go to the poor house first as last." "I'll never give up, first or last," said Mattie, "Somewhere and somehow I know there must be something better for us, and we are sure to find it sooner or later; but in the meantime I can't afford to waste any of my strength in pretending. Our clothes are old and shabby and dingy, and it's of no use trying to make them look anything else."

Dolly gave a sigh that touched Mattie's "Poor little Doffy! It's too bad for you,

you're so sweet and pretty and patient. Just wait till my ship comes in, "An you shall hee siller,

THE PARTY OF THE P Dolly smiled faintly.

"That was what father always said when v.e wanted anything. I used to believe in that ship as much as I believed in next year, and sometimes I indulge myself in dreaming about it now and fancying what it will bring

compressed, and began folding the coarse shirts on which she was working into a compact pile.

"Are they finished?" asked Dolly. "No; I'll sew on the buttons to-night; I'm going out to look for our ship."

Mattre put on a hat older and more openly ugly than Dolly's, and walked down the street with her firm, rapid tread. Once she turned to look back at the small brown house that was the only inheritance her father had left to his wife and girls-a fortune that seemed indefinitely smaller now that the mother had gone also, after a protracted sickness that had consumed the last dollar from the sale of the orchard and garden. The coarse sewing, with which the girls managed to keep soul and bady together, was certainly better than nothing, and was considered a respectable resource, but at best it was working with starvation swinging a merciless lash over their heads.

She went where many a poor soul had gone with pexplexities that seemed nobody's business-to the minister. No doubt in that penurious, poverty stricken community the good man had perplexities of his own, but that only helped him to sympathize with other people, and few households held any secrets from him. The old housekeeper, knitting on the porch, welcomed Mattie landly. The minister was away; "gone to South Adams to 'tend a funeral," but she was looking for him every minute.

Mattie went to the sludy, and turned wearily from the rows of solemn old books to find refreshment in the papers upon the table that seemed so much more modern and human. There was a story that looked tempting with its spicy bits of conversation, but this was Chapter XX.

Then there was a sermon, an exposition of the Sunday school lesson, letters from a traveler, answers to miscellaneous queries, household hints and economies, at which Mattie smiled grimly, with the feeling that she could open some depths of experience in that line herself, and at last a letter from a woman addressed to the editor, complaining that the world was out of joint and in need of regulating.

"So it is," thought Mattie, nodding assent as heartily as if the writer had been sitting there in the leather covered chair opposite her. As she read her dark face flushed and her breath came more rapidly. Why, here was a woman in desperate need of help, and here was she, asking only the chance to help her, and they were but twenty miles apart.

But then, perhaps, the letter was just made up and put in the paper; perhaps there was no Mrs. E. L. Howe, and at the thought Mattie threw down the paper and went to meet the minister who was coming in at the gate. He smiled at her impatience and seated himself very amiably to read the letter, which would never have attracted his notice. He smiled again when he looked up at her and quite agreed with her that the writer was probably a fiction of somebody's brain, created to make forcible the undoubted truth that there were scores of women with beautiful homes whose wealth brought them nothing but bondage, because of the impossibility of obtaining the help of intelligent, dependable, care taking servants, while there was a great multitude of women in need of homes and driven to all manner of miserable makeshifts for a mere livelihood who might, if they would, supply just this service, with mutual satisfaction and benefit. The prob-

lem was to bring them together. "But if the letter were genuine, my child,"

asked the minister, "what then?" "Then," said Mattie promptly, "I would write to the woman and ask her to let me try. I should like nothing better than to be her housekeeper. I delight in housekeeping; I'm a born cook, and Dolly would be perfeetly happy with two babies to cuddle and

The minister looked at her doubtfully. "I suspect it is only the rosy side of her work that this letter writer describes. There must be a good many disagreeable things about the position of cook or nursery maid.' "There are many disagreeable things about our present position," began Mattie, but

stopped abruptly. Not eyen to the minister would she have owned that they were actually pinched sometimes for suitable food.

"Do you think," she asked, hesitatingly, "there would be any impropriety in my writing to this lady to inquire!"

"Not in the least. I will forward your letter with a line to the editor. Why not write here?" he continued.

And with the promptness of desperation Mattie seized the venerable goosequill with which alone the minister thought it possible to write his sermons, and penned upon a great square sheet a brief ladylike letter. The minister's indorsement was also brief, to the effect that the writer was a sensible, practical, Christian girl, tolerably well educated, and would, in his estimation, be a benediction in a family such as that described in the communication signed Mrs. E. L. Howe. While be thought it more than probable that the case was a fictitious one, he felt sure that there were multitudes of women similarly situated, and the editor would be doing a good Christian work if he would put this young woman in communica-

tion with some one of them. The joint letter found its way in due time to the sanctum of a puzzled and amused editor, who frowned and laughed alternately over its contents, half disposed to toss it into the waste basket, but finally put it in his pocket with a dozen other documents. It might have remained there indefinitely, for

the editor was a young man and had no personal interest in the domestic problem, but dining that day with his sister his screne onof dull thumps upon the stairs, followed by

piercing screams. "There!" said Mrs. Lattimer, rushing away. "She's let the baby fall down stairs; I always said she'd kill it! I shall dismiss her the minute Fred gets back!" she panted, returning with the baby. "I never draw an easy breath except when the children are

'Oh, by the way, Florence," replied her brother, "I've got hold of a solution for all your domestic difficulties. Never say I'm NEW not practical again. Here are two servants for you made to order-a cook and a nursery maid-natives, sisters, capable, educated,

warranted by the minister. What more could you ask?" "Raymond, what on earth are you talking

"It's all here, you can see for yourself. The fact is, I've been thinking a good deal about this labor question, and one evening I wrote a letter for The Journal purporting to have come from a Mrs. E. L. Howe, setting forth her troubles with servants, and appealing to the host of respectable unemployed women for help."

"You miserable humbug! I read it with a sympathizing heart, and meant to write her myself-our cases are so much alike-only I forgot it."

"Well, here comes a letter from a rustic maiden, who speaks for her sister and herdown to undertake the job She's in serious earnest, too, and am quive

impressed by her letter. Just read it," Mrs. Lattimer read with a critical not to

say skeptical air. "I'd sooner have Bridget with all her peppery temper. Deliver me from superior, I'm as good as you are servants. I intend to be Mattie set the last stitches with her lips | mistress in my house, and I want servants and not companions and friends."

"All right, you have my approval there; but I thought the trouble was you were not mistress. They obey just far enough to enable them to keep their places and draw their wages, and they have no conception of any other kind of service. Now, if I were a housekeeper I should try these girls; certainly you couldn't be worse off."

"If you were a housekeeper you would do just as the rest of us do-bear the ills we know rather than tempt the unknown."

"Perhaps so; I'm profoundly thankful I'm not a woman, to go on doing a thing to all eternity because my grandmother did it before me, and my neighbors would think it 'so queer' of me to try a new way." "What are you going to do about the let-

ter! You really ought to answer it." "So I shall. I shall tell the minister I have

forwarded the letter to Mrs. E. L. Howe, who will correspond with him if she decides to pursue the matter." If the editor's letter, proving that Mrs. E.

L. Howe was no myth, created deep and profound excitement in the little circle of three, what can be said of the effect produced by a letter addressed to Miss Mattie Harper, offering to her and her sister service in the household of the writer, with wages and conditions very carefully specified! To be sure, it was signed Mrs. Frederic Lattimer, but of course one would use a fictitious name in a paper. The letter was written in very plain terms; it said servants, and not "hired girls," which was supposed in Hingham to be a title of greater respect, and stipulated that the engagement was only for a month of trial, at the end of which time, if Mrs. Lattimer be not pleased, she would pay their expenses

"It'll come pretty tough on you, Marthy Harper, being looked down on as a servant," said the kind old housekeeper. "You won't have any 'sociation with the fam'ly."

"I don't care to associate with the family; we don't associate with the men we make shirts for," said Mattie. "I shall have Dolly, and Dolly will have me, and we shall both have the babies. I don't think we shall care for much more."

It was only at Mattie's earnest entreaty that the minister forbore to accompany them to their new home.

"It would look as if we expected to be received as something more than we are," she said to Dolly. "And I want her tounderstand that all we ask is fair wages for fair

So they went alone. A smart looking maid answered their ring at the door bell calculated their social standing at a glance, and left them in the hall while she went for her mistress. Presently the girl came back and conducted them to the kitchen. Mattie's eyes noted that the floor was unswept, the range greasy, and a pile of unwholesome looking towels lay on the table; for Bridget had been gone a week, and a procession of supplies, each one worse than the last, had held brief possession of her kingdom.

"I am so glad it isn't a basement kitchen, and see what a nice large yard," she said to Dolly, whose eyes were ready to overflow. Something came clattering along the hall, and the door was pushed open to admit a beautiful boy of four, drawing a tin horse after him.

"Oh, you darling!" exclaimed Dolly, rap-

But the boy drew back a little saying, "Where's Bridget?"

And in a minute the nurse pounced upon him and dragged him off, calling him "a little torment and a bad, naughty boy."

Mattie's first bread, rashly undertaken with Bridget's home made yeast, was an utter failure, and the baby clung obstinately to Johanna in spite of Dolly's blandishments, while Mrs. Lattimer, knowing nothing of housekeeping herse f, had not a particle of patience with ignorance in others, and clung to her deep persuasion that nothing but the most vigorous putting down could ever keep those girls, from disagreeable assumption. But long before the end of the month Dolly reigned sweet and screne in the nursery, wore her nurse's cap without an uncomfortable thought, and drank in delight from the shaded park, with its flowers and birds and fountains, as unconscious of bitter servitude

as the children she loved and guarded. "As for Mattie," Mrs. Lattimer confessed to her brother, "she's invaluable, and I shall never be able to endure an ordinary servant again, but if she hadn't known her mind better than I did mine we should have parted the very first week. That's one blessed thing your old journal has done for the labor question, and if my ship ever comes in I'll

endow the paper out of gratitude." "Ah, I always felt that I was born to be a benefactor," said the editor. "Your ship would have come in long ago if you had

called me for a pilot." "And which one did he marry" asks the

saucy girls at my elbow. Neither of them, my dear. Pretty Dolly, in the course of time, went back to Hingham and married a farmer's boy, who had worked his way through college, and was not ashamed of his wife for having made her way in the same fashion; and Mattie, for aught I know, is a middle aged and respectable old maid, living on her savings, and educating heathen in Africa. For this story has nothing to do with marrying or giving in marriage, but with the fact that a good many ships that are continually at sea might come prosperously in, if they would join company with each other, without regarding the fact that one might be a merchant vessel and the other simply a lugger. - Congregationalist.

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