

HOW TO KEEP A SITUATION.



Y last paper, on "How to Secure a Situation," which appeared in the last volume of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER, only dealt with the first part of the subject. It is one thing to *obtain* a situation; it is quite another

thing to *keep* a situation; both of these are comprised in the word *secure*. A place may be found for us, but it frequently happens that a square person is put into a round hole, and the result is not always what might be desired. At the same time, though the process of rubbing down our angles be unpleasant, it is well to remember that we shall never find a niche that will correspond exactly to our crookedness and corners.

The success or failure of any undertaking depends, to a great extent, on the spirit in which we approach it. We should enter a new engagement with two firm resolves—first, to do our duty fully and conscientiously; second, to be happy in the sphere in which Providence has placed us. It is not sufficient to take these for granted; it is necessary to look our position in the face, and determine that these two resolves shall influence our daily life in every detail.

The faithful discharge of duty demands unselfishness, energy, patience, punctuality, and perseverance. It is owing to the lack of these that the proverb about "new brooms" is so painfully true. "Trifles make up the sum of human life;" and disregard of trifles leads to great catastrophes. There are many persons, honest as the day, and who would scorn to tell a lie, but who are, nevertheless, utterly untrustworthy. There is nothing in this world so insignificant that it may be carelessly done; whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well. Let us only fix these principles firmly in our minds, and act up to them; certainly

those who employ us will value our faithful service. If we go a step further still, and let the desire of each heart be—

"That all my powers, with all their might,
In Thy sole glory may unite,"

then we shall gain a recompense far above any earthly approbation or reward. "He who walks before God need not fear to walk before men."

There is a saying, "To be good is to be happy"; but I have found many good people who are far from being happy. To be truly and continuously happy requires as definite an effort of the will as to be good. As in the case of Mrs. Gummidge, when "thinks go contrary" there is a certain amount of pleasure—a peculiar pleasure, it is true, but a pleasure none the less—in being "lone and lorn." If we wish to be unselfish we shall guard against this. "The luxury of grief" and "the relief of tears" are allowable in circumstances of great sorrow; but in the present day there is a tendency to resort to them on far too slight pretexts. Granted that the children are peevish, that the people we have to do with are exacting, that sewing makes the head ache, that reading aloud is wearisome; our happiness should not depend on these things; it should be too deeply rooted to be touched by them. A bright, cheery face, a pleasant, kindly manner, are two of the best recommendations anyone can have.

I have no hesitation in saying that a faithful, cheerful, good-tempered girl, with few acquirements, has a better chance of ultimate success than a more brilliant one who lacks these qualities. This is true in the shop, in the office, in the schoolroom, and in the nursery. However talented we may be, though we be perfectly satisfactory in other respects, people will not be made uncomfortable by uncertainty of temper; they will not have their plans upset by unpunctuality; they will not be made anxious about their children because of the untrustworthy nurse or governess. They may

put up with these things for a time, but in the end there will be a parting. Talent alone may obtain a situation, but conscientiousness and even temper are necessary in order to keep it.

It is a great mistake to be constantly changing from one engagement to another. "A rolling stone gathers no moss." Often on entering a situation the difficulties appear insurmountable, specially if it be the first attempt. It is unwise to give up in despair; let there be a fair trial before the post is relinquished. Let us call to mind the trouble there may be to find another, and remember how many would be glad to take our place; these reflections will help us to hold on. After a few weeks, probably the difficulties will have disappeared, and we shall be thankful that we did not yield to our first impulses.

On the other hand, there may be circumstances which render it inadvisable to remain. Even if this be so, it is wrong to act hastily except in extreme cases. It is better, if possible, to continue till something else turns up. This may be a convenience to both employed and employers; and money may be saved while looking for another engagement.

As in my former paper, this advice is exceedingly simple; but it is the result of experience—and experience is just what young folks lack. As they cannot possibly be possessed of it at the outset of life's journey, their wisest course is to avail themselves of that gained by others. The entering or leaving a situation may seem a simple matter, yet our whole after-life may be altered by our course in the present. Ah! and so far-reaching is the influence of our everyday actions, that our decision, even on such a point, may affect us throughout eternity. Looking at the question in this light, the advice of those older and wiser than ourselves, valuable though it may be, is not sufficient; we need, above all things, to ask counsel of Him who can make no mistake.

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MY FATHER'S WARD.

By LA PETITE.

CHAPTER II.

ONE morning at breakfast Candy received a letter, to her own great surprise apparently, for she had often said with regret she had never made any friends who would write to her. This

epistle bore an Italian stamp, and after eagerly reading it she looked up with glowing cheeks, and exclaimed excitedly, "Just think, *ma mère*" (as she always called mother); "this is from Madame Dobrée, who lived in the same boarding-house with us in Penzance! She often invited me to tea, and gave me presents; and now writes to say she is staying at Genoa, but will winter in Florence, and wishes me to go with her. Ah, but it would be too delightful! I could go on with my beloved

painting to some purpose there. Do you think guardian will let me go?"

"Ah, but it would be too delightful!" mimicked that tiresome Robert *sotto voce*, but loud enough for us to hear.

Candy flushed, but said nothing. I looked daggers at him, and mother, with as much severity as she was capable of, remarked, "It is more than time for you to be off, Robert. You had better go at once. Make haste."

When only our three selves were left, mother turned to Candy, and said gently, "My dear, don't raise your hopes too high, as I fear they may be disappointed. Nevertheless," she added kindly, "we will leave it till my husband returns, and see what he says about it." With this the subject dropped. We dispersed to our various duties, and no more was said about it till evening.

After supper, when the children were out of the way and only we elders were in the room, Candy produced the letter and gave it to father, at the same time timidly asking leave to go.

He silently read it, and then, looking up, said quietly, "Is your heart very much set on this, child?"

"Yes," she replied, with an eager light in her eyes. "I should love to go. It has always been a dream of mine to see Florence."

"Then I am the more sorry to say no," he answered, with the determined look we all knew so well. "I am grieved to deny you anything, but it is quite impossible."

Candy's face fell visibly as she said quickly, "Oh, why, guardian?"

"Well, to begin with," he returned, "we know little or nothing of Madame Dobrée; and I certainly could not place you under the care of a stranger for so long, and at such a distance from home. That is one reason, and that must suffice. I am sure you are too sensible not to know I would not deny you this pleasure unless I were sure it was best." With that he laid down the letter with an air of dismissing the subject, and turning to Lily (my seventeen-year-old sister, who had a very pretty voice), said, "Aren't you going to give me a song to-night, Lilian?"

I must say Candy took it very well, considering she did not know the real objection, for she thought her disreputable uncle was dead. Beyond a quiver of the lips she made no sign, though I saw she was grievously

