

MORE SUCH GIRLS WANTED.

A Story Worth Reading.

"MOTHER," said Lizzie West, as she entered the pleasant little sitting-room where her mother and sisters were at work, "can you spare me for a few days? Mrs. Lane is not able to sit up yet, and that impudent Bridget has gone off and left her, with everything in the house at sixes and sevens. I thought if you were willing I would go and stay with her for a few days."

"How did that happen! I thought when I called there the other day that Bridget seemed to be contented, and did her work, as though she liked it. In Mrs. Lane's house?"

"She seems feverish, but who wouldn't? I don't really believe she has had anything fit to eat to-day, and poor little Nellie was crying for her breakfast. I found bread that should have been baked yesterday, standing on the kitchen table, spoiled, of course. Bridget had just finished kneading it before she asked for an increase of wages. Mrs. Lane thought she was paying her all she was worth, and told her so; and that she could not afford to give her higher wages at present. Bridget retorted that 'folks shouldn't keep servants who couldn't afford to pay decent wages.' She went to the city on the 12 o'clock train. This morning Mr. Lane has been all over the village, trying to find some one to stay with them until Mrs. Lane is better, but cannot find any one. The girls all seem so afraid of going out to work; even for a few days. May I go?"

"If you wish, Lizzie; I do not want any of my daughters to go out as servants, but I could not let a good neighbor like Mrs. Lane suffer, if I had to go myself. I will give you a loaf of bread to take with you, as you will need some to last until you bake. I am glad I do not have to keep help; they waste more than their wages come to in the course of a year."

"Lizzie, when will you get your dress done if you go over there?" asked Alice.

"Oh, the dress will answer a while longer, as it is. I am glad I did not commence to rip it before I ran over to Mrs. Lane's. As she spoke she took up from a chair a pretty brown walking dress, and carried it with her as she left the room. She went to her room to get a few things that she needed, and just as she was ready Mr. Lane stopped at the door."

"I have been making one more trial," he said, "but have failed again. I shall have to go to the city this afternoon and get another girl from the office. Mrs. West, will you let one of your daughters stay with my wife while I am gone?"

"Lizzie was just going over there. I am sorry you have so much trouble in getting help."

Mr. Lane's face brightened.

"Yes, sir," said Lizzie, "and I will stay as long as Mrs. Lane needs me."

"Jump in, then," he said, taking her little traveling bag and tucking it under the seat.

When they had started, he turned to her and said, "I don't know how to thank you enough for this, Lizzie. I dreaded above all things getting a new girl; Agnes is almost worried to death with them now. She might have been well by this time, if she had had good help."

The invalid smiled brightly as her husband laughingly introduced the New Help. Then she began to cry from sheer weariness and exhaustion. Lizzie knew that the best thing for her patient would be a good nap. She made the bed, cleared up the room, and after drawing the curtains to shut out the sunlight, left her to sleep, taking Nellie down to the kitchen to keep her quiet. She slept so long that Lizzie had ample time to get Mr. Lane's dinner, and put the parlor and sitting-room in order, discovering, as she did so, that the shade of the large lamp was broken, and three pieces of Mrs. Lane's china tea-set. On counting the silver, three spoons and as many forks were missing.

"Well, Agnes, how do you feel?" asked Mr. Lane that evening. "This begins to look a little more like home, doesn't it?"

"Yes, indeed, George; I feel perfectly easy now, and will try to get well as soon as possible. You don't know what a relief it is."

"I guess we know something about it, don't we Puss?" he said, pecking Nellie off the stool by her mother's sofa, and throwing her up in the air. "By the way, Agnes, did you know the large lamp was broken?"

"Bridget told me the cat jumped on the table when she was cleaning it, and knocked the shade off."

"Nee didn't," said Nellie, from her father's shoulder. "Nellie seed Biddyt 'bake 'em her own se'f."

"What did she do, Puss?"

"Se put 'em in a bid pan of hot water."

"The careless thing! Anything else George?"

"Yes; two of the china cups and the cream jug are broken, and three of the spoons and forks are missing."

"Only three? Well, she wasn't very sharp or she would have taken more than that; she had chances enough. But I won't fret over that now. If I can only keep Lizzie West until I am strong enough

to do my own work again, I'll never have another Irish girl in the house."

At the end of the week Mr. Lane said, "Lizzie, I never thought to ask what you are going to charge for the privilege of making us so comfortable, so I'll ask you now."

"I had not thought of that, sir; I came because Mrs. Lane was sick, and I thought I could make her comfortable. I never once thought of wages."

"That may be, but I cannot let you work for us for nothing. We want you to stay a month or two, if you will. We paid Bridget eight dollars a month. I would willingly give you more if you will stay; your work is worth more than her's, to say nothing of the waste she made. What do you say to ten dollars?"

"I cannot tell now, sir; I shall have to speak to mother before I decide."

"Well, let me know as soon as you have made up your mind."

"I hope she isn't going to disappoint me now," he thought to himself. "I thought her above the silly prejudice against work."

Lizzie lay awake a long time that night thinking over Mr. Lane's proposition. The next evening she went home for a short time, and, as soon as the inquiries after Mrs. Lane's health were answered, she said:

"Mother, I think I shall stay some time longer. Mrs. Lane wants me, and Mr. Lane offered me ten dollars a month. I shall stay and be earning something for myself, instead of making one more for father to support."

She thought she understood the dislike her mother and sisters felt toward such a proceeding, but she was not prepared for the reproaches that assailed her on all sides. She tried for a time to answer them quietly and patiently, but at last, turning to her father, she asked him if he would not help her.

"There is no real need of your doing this, Lizzie," he answered. "I should like it, if you could find something your mother would like better. For my part, I can see no disgrace in what you propose doing; my mother and sister both occupied such positions, and I never knew they were respected the less for it. You must make your own choice, my daughter, but consider it well before you decide. It may subject you to some very unpleasant slights."

Mr. West was called out to speak to a neighbor, and as soon as the door closed behind him, the girls began again. But Lizzie bravely stood her ground.

"There is no use in talking, girls; if father does not object, I shall go. You say I have no pride. I have pride enough to earn my own living if I possibly can. I can state the whole case in very few words. You all know that father has mortgaged his farm to help Uncle Charles in his trouble; you know, too, that this year it will be nearly impossible for him to pay the interest. I try to get along with as little as possible, but everything counts. Now, here I have a good chance offered me, and would be very foolish not to take it. I don't see any more disgrace in sweeping floor and washing dishes for Mrs. Lane, than doing it at home. You know that she is not the woman to treat one as though I had no rights of my own."

"If you are bound to work, Liz, why don't you try to teach?"

"I have neither the taste nor inclination to teach. Besides there are a dozen applicants for every vacant situation. I should stand no chance at all with those who have spent time and money in preparation for the work. You know that my throat and lungs are not very strong, and would last but a short time if I tried teaching. I am sorry you feel so badly, Julia, but I cannot see that I am doing anything wrong."

"You are just as obstinate in this as everything else. You know we shall be cut by all our friends."

"No, I don't know any such thing. People whose friendship is worth having will respect me none the less for trying to maintain myself honestly, and others I do not care for. It is useless to talk any longer, it only makes matters worse. I promised to go back to night, and will go and get ready."

When she came down stairs again her mother and sisters were still in tears. Neither of them returned her kiss or hardly spoke when she bade them "good night." As she passed through the hall her father stopped her and said:

"Lizzie, you will need a stout heart to bear you through; if you find it too hard work, come home again. My children are all welcome as long as I can keep a home for them. It is better for you all to learn to support yourselves, for perhaps you will have to do it sometime. Good night, my daughter."

He gave her a kiss and helped her into the wagon, (for Mr. Lane had called for her on his return from the store.) She told Mrs. Lane that evening that she had decided to stay as long as they wished to keep her.

"I shall not let you go very soon, then; you are as good as nurse and housekeeper both."

It was nearly three weeks after her visit home that she had occasion to go to the store to do some shopping for Mrs. Lane. While she was sitting by the counter try-

ing to decide which of two shades of merino would make Nellie the prettiest dress, two of her old schoolmates came in. She bowed to them as they approached, but with out returning the bow Belle King crossed to the opposite counter. Ada Lee glanced from one to the other in surprise, and then offered her hand to Lizzie, saying:

"It is a long time since I saw you. Miss Lizzie; how are your mother and sisters? I have not had time to return Miss West's call since I came back from the city."

"I think they are all well, thank you," answered Lizzie.

"I shall call on you and your sisters as soon I can possibly find the time."

Here Belle beckoned to her and when she had reached her side said in a loud whisper:

"Why, Ada, how can you speak to a servant girl in that way? Don't you know that Liz West has gone out to work in Mrs. Lane's kitchen?" she asked to Ada's surprised look.

"Don't speak so loud, she will hear you. How long since I have heard nothing of it," said Ada, so low that Lizzie could not catch the words.

"She went about a month ago, I believe; the other girls are hurt, and tried every way they could to stop her, but she was determined to go."

Lizzie finished her shopping and started for home. In crossing the next street one of her small parcels slipped from her hand and fell to the ground. She was stooping to pick it up, when a gentleman who was crossing in the opposite direction quickly secured it, and after brushing the dust from the white paper, handed it to her with a polite bow. She glanced up to thank him, and met the gaze of his companion. It was a young man who had visited her sister Julia quite frequently. She bowed to him and was about to speak, when he bowed haughtily without raising his hat, and passed on. Before she reached Mrs. Lane's door she met with two more slights.

To say that she did not care would be to make my heroine something more than mortal. She was a proud, sensitive girl, and she felt hurt as you or I would, reader.

As she entered the little parlor and laid her purchases before Mrs. Lane her lips were compressed and a bright spot of color glowed on either cheek. Mrs. Lane noticed the signs of disturbance and guessed the cause, but did not speak of it. It was not the only time that she saw the same expression when Lizzie had been out. She mentioned it to her husband one evening several weeks after, and he said:

"I have seen it myself. I do not blame her for feeling hurt, but I felt the other day as though I should enjoy knocking down young Grey, and shutting up Miss Julia until she could learn to behave herself. They were walking up the street the other day, and I was just behind them. Lizzie came out of Smith & Grey's store a few steps in front of them, but did not see them until they were passing her. Julia turned her face the other way, and looked at something or nothing on the other side of the street. Young Grey, the insolent puppy, put up that eye glass of his and stared at Lizzie as though she was some great curiosity."

"Alice is the only one of the girls that has called to see her since she has been here. Julia seems to think her far beneath her notice."

"She and Laura are too full of nonsense and false pride for a poor man's daughters. They think Lizzie has disgraced the family, when she is the only one in it who has the pride and self-reliance to earn her own living. I know that the money I paid her last month and the month before, went to help West pay the interest on that mortgage Lee holds on that place. You wouldn't catch Julia doing anything like that."

"Lizzie spends ever spare moment in reading. I gave her permission one day to use any of the books she liked, and she planned her work so that she has had nearly an hour ever day."

"Good! Give her every chance you can."

"I will; there is much more satisfaction trying to give her time for reading than in granting Bridget's frequent petitions for an afternoon out. She does the work in much less time, and I have not been obliged to oversee the first thing."

When Lizzie had been with her nearly five months, Mrs. Lane received a visit from her sister. Mrs. Dunning was lying on the lounge one afternoon when Lizzie came in and sat down at the further end of the room to read. She glanced inquiringly at Mrs. Lane, but as that lady did not seem surprised she said nothing until Lizzie went out to prepare tea. Then turning to her sister with a laugh, said:

"Well, well, Agnes, is this the latest fashion for servants? What will they do next?"

"What do you think of it?"

"I do not know what to think. I was surprised to see her at your table, but now I am astonished. Where did you get her?"

In a few words Mrs. Lane told the whole story, and ended by saying, "I have kept her longer than I really needed her, but I can't bear the thought of her going, I shall be lonesome."

"I wonder if she would engage with me?"

If I could only get a good American girl or woman for a housekeeper, I would willingly do to her as you do to Lizzie. I think I will make her an offer."

"You will get a treasure if she will, and I think she would go."

Mrs. Denning was true to her word. She offered high wages and said:

"You seem to be fond of reading, and you shall have as good opportunities for it as you have here."

Lizzie accepted her offer, and in a few weeks entered upon her duties. She met with the same opposition at home as on her first attempt; but it cost her less pain to bear it than before. Julia said:

"Liz, you are a perfect fool! That stuck up Mrs. Denning will order you around like any of her other servants, and not let you dare to say your soul is your own."

"I do not think the woman lives that can do that. If Mrs. Denning proves a hard mistress, I have the same privilege that other servants have, I can leave."

"Well, I believe you were cut out for a servant, and nothing else; you are growing dowdy already. I am glad I have a soul above pots and kettles."

A third person would have been amused by the conversation, and the contrast presented by the two girls. Lizzie, with her graceful, erect figure, clear complexion, bright eyes and rosy cheeks; Julia, with her shoulders drawn forward in the latest fashionable stoop, waist pinched up, and complexion sallow from late hours and want of exercise. In reality she was not quite two years older, but she looked at least five.

A stranger would not call Lizzie pretty; her hair and eyes are brown, and her complexion dark but clear. Her nose and mouth are too large to be pretty, but as she stands looking down at Julia, she looks every inch a lady.

She found her position in Mrs. Denning's house rather trying at first; the other servants were jealous and ready to take any advantage they could get. Old servants she found so unwilling to submit to her authority, that, after she had been there a year, she persuaded Mrs. Denning to let her take several young girls and train them herself.

At first she found very little time to read, though, as she had promised, Mrs. Denning allowed her to choose what books she liked from a large and well selected library. She was an early riser, and always spent a few moments in reading; to have something to think of when her hands were busy. She spent a few weeks of each summer at home, and her father looked forward to these visits as the brightest and pleasantest weeks in the year. Her mother overcame her old prejudices and treated her once more as she did before she left home. But Julia and Laura could not be convinced that she had not lowered the dignity of the family. They avoided the mention of her name in conversation if possible, or, if obliged to speak of her called her a companion. This caused their friends much amusement, particularly Ada Lee who, from the time of their meeting in the store, had cultivated Lizzie's acquaintance. She heard from her father how Lizzie had assisted Mr. West to pay off the mortgage on his farm, and being a sensible, affectionate girl, at once decided that the friendship of such a girl was worth having. She had visited her at Mrs. Lane's, and since her removal to the city had kept up a correspondence that was a source of great pleasure to them both.

In one of her letters she said:

"Lizzie, if you have time, will you try to write something to print? I showed one of your letters the other day to a friend who edits the *Monthly*. After reading it, he asked, 'Does your friend write for the press?' I told him I thought not. 'If she can write such letters as that, she is capable of something more. Ask her to send me an article for the *Monthly*.' Will you try, dear Lizzie, just to please me?"

"Always your friend,"

"ADA."

Lizzie answered:

"I have often wished I had time to write, Ada, but get so little that I have not attempted anything more than a very short article, upon a subject which very much interests me."

Ada wrote again:

"I am at your service, Lizzie; send your rough sketches to me, and I will copy them for you. I can do that, though I have not brains enough to compose for myself. You can really do me a favor if you will. I have more time than I know how to use, and it is at your disposal."

In this way Lizzie became a contributor to two of our most popular magazines. Ada was delighted and aided her in every way she could. She managed to keep up an acquaintance with Julia and Laura, though as she confessed to her father, "it was hard work."

"I want them to know how famous Lizzie is getting, but she will not let me tell them. I hope when they do find it out I shall be present. I want to see what they will do."

When Lizzie had been with Mrs. Denning three years she was much surprised one day by receiving a call from a bachelor friend of Mr. Denning's who had seen her in his frequent visit to that gentleman and, as he thought, fallen in love with her. He was forty-five years of age, very wealthy and very proud.

He made a formal and business-like offer of his hand and heart; but with such a

condescending air that she felt like boxing his ears.

Nothing could equal the crestfallen air with which he left the room, after receiving a polite but decided refusal.

"Where is your friend Graham, why does he never come to dinner of late?" asked Mrs. Denning of her husband one evening.

"I have asked him several times, but he always pleads an engagement. I strongly suspect that Lizzie could tell why if she chose."

"Why you don't think—?"

"That he has proposed and been rejected? Exactly."

"She must be crazy, to refuse him. Why any girl in our set would jump at the chance. What an establishment he could give her."

"That may be, but she is not the girl to sell herself for an establishment. She has read his character correctly, I think. He is proud enough to think she ought to feel honored by his preference, and say: 'Yes, sir; thank you,' the moment he proposed.' 'She can't do any better.'"

Only a few weeks after this Mrs. Denning was surprised by a visit from her half-brother, Ralph Cleveland. He came lounging into the sitting-room one morning, saying:

"Kate, I think I'll settle down to some kind of business, and stay at home, now."

"It is nearly time; you have wandered about long enough. Do you think of marrying? With your looks and fortune, you could choose anywhere."

"Yes, I know all that; but I want some one that will care for poor Ralph when his good looks and money are gone."

"Your old friend Gussie is still unmarried."

"Bah! who wants a doll; I want a good, true-hearted woman. I came here to find her, Kate."

"Not Lizzie!"

"Yes Lizzie. Agnes has told me her story, and I came to try my luck. What is the matter, don't you like the idea?"

"Lizzie is good enough for you or any one else, but—I shall wish she were not my housekeeper, if you succeed."

"Afraid of Mrs. Grundy? Pahaw, Kate, I thought you were not afraid of what people say."

Mrs. Denning did not answer, but her usually pleasant face wore a frown.

"Come, Kate, you just said she was 'good enough for me or any one else,' and I am sure she is a woman no man living need be ashamed to call wife. But I am talking as though I felt sure of success. I do not at all. Your husband told me yesterday that he thought she had refused Graham. Is it so?"

"We only think so. Lizzie is not the girl to talk of such a chance, if she had it. I would as soon think of asking Mr. Graham himself, as of asking her."

"She is not looking for money then, or she would not have done that. Well, I shall try at all events. What will you do, Kate?"

"Let you alone. I shall neither help nor hinder. You must do it all yourself."

I have not space to tell a love story now, so the reader must fill it up to suit him or herself. One day, three months after the above conversation, Julia (now Mrs. Grey) was much astonished, during a call at her mother's, by the news that Lizzie was coming home to be married.

"Who in the world is she going to marry? Some coachman or waiter, I suppose; that would be just her style. What is his name, nothing Irish, I hope?"

When she was married, two years before, Lizzie had not been informed until the wedding was over, and now, in return, Lizzie had requested her parents not to tell Julia who she was to marry.

Ada Lee was at this time engaged to her friend, the editor, and after a consultation with Lizzie it was decided that they should have a double wedding.

Lizzie wrote: "Mrs. Denning wants to give me a grand wedding, but I do not wish to make a show for people who come to criticize my dress and see the housekeeper who is going to marry her brother, and do not care two pins whether I am made happy or miserable for life. The plan you propose suits me exactly."

Lizzie did not meet Ada's lover until the evening before the wedding. She looked at him again and again, trying to remember where she had seen him before, but for a long time she could not think. At last it flashed across her mind, and just then he said:

"Miss West, I am certain that I have seen you before, but where I cannot think I have a good memory for faces, and yours is one not easily forgotten, but I cannot place it."

"I believe you picked up a bundle for me once in the street. You were walking with my present brother-in-law, Mr. Grey. I believe I was so much offended at his behavior that I forgot to thank you. He could not afford to be civil to a servant girl."

To say that Julia was amazed when she found who Lizzie's husband was, and that she had become so well known by her writings, would give but a feeble description of her state of mind. She and Laura are now Lizzie's most devoted admirers, and "My sister, Mrs. Cleveland," is quoted on all occasions.