

VARIOUS

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FRANCIE FISHER'S FISH

By Marion Vfllete Thornton

On the Primary Room wall was a beautiful picture of a shining river. Francie loved to count the fish that were swimming in it. Just fourteen there were, and every one stood for a new scholar someone had brought into the Primary Class.

How Francie wished he could bring one and have Miss Florence pin a fish in the river and a red tag on his blouse to show that he had caught it.

“How you s'pose I can get a fish, mother?” he asked earnestly. “I should think a Fisher-boy ought to be able to catch just one.”

Mother shook her head. “I don't know, I'm sure. There isn't a child on this street who doesn't go to Sunday-school.”

“P'r'aps one will move on,” said Francie hopefully.

But when a new family did move to that street there were no children in it.

One day Francie came flying into the house. “Oh. mother, the

ash-man's here and I b'lieve he's got a fish with him!"

"What?" exclaimed mother, but when she looked out she understood. Sitting in the ash-man's cart was a pretty little boy, with black eyes and tight curly hair.

"Is he yours. Mr. Lugi?" mother asked, and the ash-man smiled and nodded:

"Yes. mine—my Rafael."

"Does he go to Sunday-school?" put in Francie eagerly.

"No, no school—too little, him."

"Oh, but it's just Sundays and we sing and there's pictures. Couldn't he please go with me. Mr. Lugi?" begged Francie, "I'll take awful good care of him."

Mother explained a little more, and at last Mr. Lugi said Rafael might go, only—"No dress up, no clothes," he said sadly.

But that did not trouble Francie. "Why, he can have my brown suit, can't he, mother? I'd just as soon."

The next day mother took Francie down to see Mrs. Lugi. Little Rafael was shy at first, but he soon got over it and was friendly as could be. The little black-eyed Italian mother was very glad to see them.

"I like Rafael go the Christ-church," she said. "I use go myself, home—Italy."

The brown suit, too small for Francie, was just right for Rafael, and it would have been hard to find two happier little boys than Francie and his fish when they walked into the Primary class together.

Rafael clapped his hands with the rest when Miss Florence pinned the fish in the river and the red tag on Francie's blouse.

And what do you think? Out in the big room there were two more new fish, one in Mother Fisher's class and one in Father Fisher's. They were Mr. Lugi and the little Italian mother, come to Sunday-school with their little boy.

“Really and truly,” Francie said, “seem's if I caught three fish 'stead of one.”

“Really and truly,” said Mother Fisher, “I think you did.”

“ALL BY HERSELF.”

The older children were gone out for the day: mamma was busy in the sewing room with Miss Fay: Molly was doing the Saturday baking. “What could Alice do all by herself?”

This was the very question that popped into the wee girl's own head, and she trotted off to ask mamma.

“Here's I,” she said, at the sewing room door. “Here's I, all by myself. What's I goin' do, mamma?”

“Going to be mamma's good little daughter and amuse yourself this morning without help from anybody. See how busy I am.”

“Everybody's busy that isn't gone way off,” said Alice dolefully.

“Well, then,” said mamma. “Alice must be busy, too, taking care of herself and making her own good times. See how well she can do it.

“But first of all,” mamma went on, “think what you would like to do or to have me get for you, and I'll stop a minute now for that, so as to start you.”

This was an important thing to decide, so Alice went into the next room and sat down in her kindergarten chair before her table, to think it out. She folded her arms and sat still about a minute: then she ran to mamma, exclaiming. “I know now, please get me my snub scissors” (of course she meant round-pointed)

“and some bright paper, and I'll cut and cut ever so long.”

Mamma dropped her work and got the things. “Now, dear,” she said, “see if you can't get along the rest of the morning by yourself. Dolly and the picture books are in the dining room. Don't ask me for anything if you can help it, but keep out of mischief and be as happy as you can.”

Alice went back to her little table and soon had it covered with queer things. There were the oddest dolls you ever saw, with arms sticking out like stems: and there were horses with as many legs as could be put along the whole length of the body. It was great fun to cut them.

But by and by Alice grew tired of this, and jumped up quickly. Over went the little table, scattering things everywhere. Such a litter! “I'll just leave it all,” thought Alice. Then a little voice inside said. “Pick it all up and help mamma.” After a minute, the little girl obeyed this pleasant voice, and picked up every scrap. Then she ran downstairs without stopping at the sewing room door, though she wanted to.

“Peggy Morlinda,” she said, taking dolly from her cradle, “is you all by yourself, too? Isn't it lonesome? Come, I'll put you to sleep.”

Peggy was soon asleep, or supposed to be, though her eyes were still staring.

“Now I will go take one little peek at mamma.” said Alice, starting upstairs, but stopping next step. “No. I won't neiver,” she said bravely. “I won't 'sturb mamma one bit.”

After this the little girl found amusement for awhile at the library window. Next, she went back to the picture books, and read a long story, all made up out of her own head, to Peggy Morlinda, who woke up to listen. But what a long morning it was! She did not enjoy it much, but she made up her mind about one thing—she wouldn't “'sturb mamma.”

At last papa came home and Alice ran to him to be tossed up and down, and they had a fine frolic.

“Have you gotten along nicely with your work?” asked papa of mamma at dinner.

“Very nicely, thank you,” said mamma. “Alice helped me a great deal!”

“Alice!” exclaimed papa, looking as surprised as possible. “Can Alice sew?”

Mamma laughed. “Oh, no, indeed, not yet,” she said, “but she gave me a fine chance to do it. She amused herself all morning and did not ask me to do anything for her, so we got on beautifully with the work in the sewing room.”

“Good girl,” said papa, and Alice looked as happy as she felt. Oh, how glad she was that she had not left those scraps of paper for mamma to pick up! It is always safe to listen to the little inward voice that says, “Do right.”

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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