

THE BLUE BOW

By Beth Slater Whitson

Mattie came flying up the steps with a parcel post package, which the postman had just left in her hand. Hattie, her twin sister had walked to the village to do an errand for mother.

“It must be from Aunt Rachel, mother!” exclaimed Mattie, beginning to untie the cord which bound the package.

“But isn’t it addressed to Hattie as well as yourself, dear?” Mrs. Reynolds asked gently.

“Oh, Hattie won’t mind my opening it!” declared Mattie, flushing a little but continuing to unwrap the package. She gave a little squeal of delight as she lifted the cover from the box, revealing to lovely hair ribbons made into just such beautiful bows as only dear Aunt Rachel, who lived away off in the city and was always sending pretty things to her little nieces, could make. “Aren’t they lovely, mama?” smiled Mattie, holding them up for her mother’s inspection. “I shall have the blue one.”

“But Hattie might also care for the blue one, little daughter,” said Mrs. Reynolds. “O, she never cares! She likes pink just as well as blue.”

“You mean she is too unselfish to made a choice when she sees your heart is set on the thing she likes best.”

Mattie looked up at her mother in astonishment. The little seeds of selfishness had been springing up in their heart since babyhood, and no one ever before had called her attention to them. Now, like most people who are told of their faults, she got a little angry, and the flush in her cheeks got deeper.

“She may have both of them for all I care,” Mattie declared in a quiet, offended manner, setting the box in Mrs. Reynold’s lap and turning to leave room.

“Wait a minute, Mattie,” her mother said. “Mother kept hoping the you would see this fault of yours without being told of it. It has hurt you to be reminded of it: but sometime we have hurt before we can heal, just as when you had a stone bruise; it hurt to have it opened, but your foot got well right away. Now run out and do your chores and see if you can decide willingly to give Hattie the choice of Auntie’s gifts for just this one time.”

“For just this one time,” kept echoing through Mattie’s head as she drew the water fed the chickens. It was true, and she acknowledged at last, that she had always chosen what she liked best of all that had been sent to them, and Hattie never had complained.

It was a very thoughtful little girl that went back to the sitting room. “I didn’t know before that I was selfish, mamma,” she said, putting her arms contritely around her mother.

Just then Hattie came in and, catching sight of the new bows, dropped her packages. “From Aunt Ray, I know.” she said. “How pretty the blue one will look on you, sister!”

“Indeed, it won’t, denied Mattie, giving her sister a hug. You are going to have the blue one yourself, for I know you like blue as much as I.” And with a little deft touch she pinned the blue bow on her sister’s pretty golden braids.

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