

THE WAIT-A-MINUTE GIRL

By Beth Slater Whitson

Esther heard her mother calling from the front porch; but she was just halfway through the piano composition she was practicing, so she paused only long enough to call back, "Just wait-a-minute, mamma" and went on with her practice.

Ten minutes later she found her mother on the porch. "I was almost through my piece and wanted to finish it," she explained. "Did you want me to go on an errand for you, mother?"

"O, no," answered Mrs. Ray, smiling. "Your little friend Ernestine was driving to the village and stopped by for you. But she was in a hurry and couldn't wait."

"But why didn't you tell me, mamma?" cried Esther disappointedly.

"I did call you, dear," returned Mrs. Ray gently.

"But you never said why, mamma."

"I never call you from your practice unless I think it is a matter of importance," said Esther's mother quietly.

And Esther, with tears of disappointment in her blue eyes, flushed deeply and went into the house, leaving Mrs. Ray to wonder if this would her little daughter's habit of waiting.

During the next few days Esther was very careful to drop whatever she was doing and answer her mother's call. Then she slipped gradually back into the old habit.

One afternoon in the early springtime she was in the front yard planning the flower beds for the summer blooming, when a dull, muffled sound, as of something falling, came from the house, and then her mother's voice calling her faintly.

"Just a minute, mamma," she answered. Then she went on finishing her plans for the flower beds.

It seemed to her only a few minutes at best before she ran to the house, but she found her mother unconscious at the foot of the stairs; she had fallen and broken her wrist.

Esther's frightened cries brought in the neighbors, who soon restored her mother to consciousness and called in a doctor to set the broken arm.

But Esther went about white and trembling the rest of the day, scarcely leaving the room for a moment. That night, when Mrs. Ray assured her that she was resting well and insisted on Esther going to sleep, the little girl slipped to her knees by her mother's bed and sobbed brokenly. "O, mamma," she cried, "just to think I stayed on planning flower beds after you called me, and you suffered so! I'll never, never, never ask you again to wait a minute. See if I do, mamma."

"I feel sure that my little 'wait-a-minute girl' has gone to stay," answered Esther's mother kissing her lovingly.

From: The North Carolina Christian Advocate
Our Little Folks Department
Vol. 15, No. 51, Page 13
December 9, 1915