



Alexios

CHARACTER BUILDING STORIES

Kitty had a birthday present which pleased her very much indeed. What, do you think it was? A sandalwood work-box from Uncle Curtis, with scissors, thimble, needles, and everything it was proper for a complete work-box to have. It gave a great **spur*** to Kitty's love of sewing. She did not like a needle and thread before; now, she did.

And so Kitty undertook to hem a dozen towels. A dozen towels was a pile, to be sure; but she well knew it was only a stitch at a time; and a stitch at a time is perfectly within the **compass** of a small child to do. Kitty was on the first towel, doing it all herself, even to turning down the hem, and had hemmed half of one end when she took it to her papa.



"Papa," she asked, "is not that hem even?"

Papa took his eyes from his newspaper, looked at the hem, then looked at his little Kitty as much as to say, "Do you think it is, Kitty?"

"Don't you think it is almost even?" asked Kitty, guessing his meaning, and blushing.

"What is almost even?" asked papa, stroking his little girl's hair.

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*See Glossary at the end of the book for the definitions of words in bold.

"What is almost even?" repeated Kitty, with a look of surprise in her blue eyes.

"Yes," answered he. Kitty thought a moment, and her father waited for the thought.

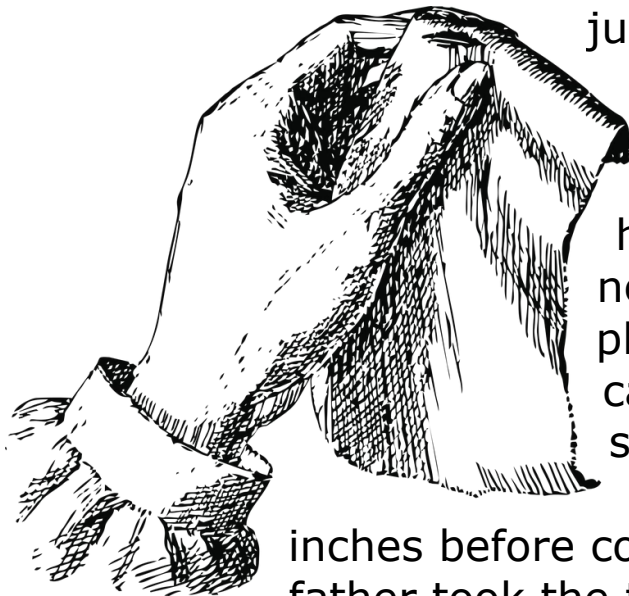
"It is uneven," replied Kitty.

"Yes," replied papa; almost even is uneven. The hem is uneven."

"Then it must be picked out and done over," said Kitty, with a disappointed **hitch**; "I want to do it right."

"Of course," replied her father.

"Papa is setting himself up to be a great judge of hems," thought Kitty. She did not believe her mother would be so exact. However, since she asked him, she could not do less than act on his judgment.



Kitty went back to her window seat, picked out her stitches, which nobody considers to be pleasant work, and carefully began the second time. She did not dare to go beyond two inches before coming to show it. Her father took the towel in his hand and examined the hem.

"This is even," he said; "the stitches are in a straight line; the work is done right."

And Kitty, I am sure, was more pleased than if she had succeeded at first; and much more than if her father had thoughtlessly said, "Very well," when it was done ill.

"Kitty," said papa, taking her small hand in his, "there is a straight line running through life, and on one side of it is the wrong side; on the other is the right side; and everything is on one side or the other. There is no such thing as almost right. Almost right is always wrong; almost good is bad; almost true is an untruth, a lie; as almost even is uneven."



"Yes, papa," Kitty added, "and an almost perfect lesson is an imperfect lesson. I told the girls so. Because, if you miss once you lose your place."

"Exactly so," said papa; "and as God is a truth-loving God, he likes to have things called by their right names. He wants us to see the truth, and to speak the truth; and, in order to do so, we must be exact in our words and expressions."

Word Glossary

Compass--reach, obtaining,

Hitch--a sudden movement

Spur-- motivation, incentive, urge

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