

larger than I had intended it to be, which was unfortunate, because it covered so much carpet. I set Rhoda to clean up the mess while I made another poultice. Rhoda muttered something about people doing one job and making fifty others, but when I asked what she was saying she said she did not speak.

The next poultice was not a success, and I scalded my hand and broke a basin over it; but it was made, and that was something. I took it upstairs carefully, and after a deal of trouble and leaking of poultice on to everything I managed to put it on. Granny thanked me, and said I was very clever. I did not tell her about my hand, or the basin, or the stair carpet. I thought it best not to worry her. Then she told me to go down to dinner; she did not want any, and would only take a cup of tea.

I was much concerned that Granny could not eat; a cup of tea seemed a poor kind of a meal. But there was the chicken broth, I must see about that.

"Rhoda!" I said, "I want a chicken to make some broth."

"Yes, Miss. Shall I kill the grey or the white one?"

Kill a grey or white chicken! I suddenly felt sick. A chicken out of a shop was one thing, but to kill a real, live one, just to make broth, was another matter.

"Can't we buy one, Rhoda?"

"Not till Saturday, Miss, and Missis doesn't like bought chickens; she says there's nothing on 'em."

"Oh, very well. I don't know which would be best; you must decide."

"Yes, Miss. Will you come and feel 'em, to see which is fattest?"

"No!" I shrieked; "I will not!" And I rushed upstairs and shut myself in my bedroom, wondering how on earth people could kill chickens. Yet Granny did it, and she was a darling, and not at all unkind.

When I went down half-an-hour later, it suddenly dawned upon me that I was very hungry, and that I had forgotten Granny's tea. Rhoda was in the kitchen, plucking the white chicken. I felt as though I had committed murder when I saw it.

"Rhoda!" I said, "I must make Granny some tea. She says she does not want anything to eat."

"Very well, Miss. Shall I get it ready, or shall I finish this?"

"I think I'll get the tea, because that chicken broth will take some time to cook, I suppose, so we had better get it on as soon as possible."

"Yes, Miss. Will you draw it, Miss?"

"Draw it! Draw what, Rhoda?"

"The chicken, Miss. Take its inside out, you know."

"No, certainly not! And what about dinner?"

"Well, Miss, I can't do everything. It took me all morning messing round after that poultice, and now it's nearly three o'clock. With sickness in the house I suppose we can't look to have meals reg'lar. I think we'd better miss dinner and have tea early."

Rhoda was certainly growing cross, so I agreed to miss dinner, and departed to take up Granny's tea.

I found the poultice lying on a chair beside Granny's bed.

"Oh, Granny!" I cried. "Was it not made properly?"

"Yes, darling; but I've had it on long enough. Perhaps you will take it away. I felt too weak to get out of bed, so had to put it on a chair. I think it did me good. I will take my tea, now, and then, perhaps, I could get to sleep. I hope you had a good dinner."

Dinner! I wished I had had any, but did not say so; I merely made some remark about the weather.

Granny drank a whole cup of tea, and ate one thin bit of bread and butter. I felt better after she had had that, and I hope she did.

At five o'clock we had tea. I had breakfasted at 8.30. It was not nice tea; it tasted of something else, but I managed to drink it, and to eat a large amount of cake and bread and butter. I felt better afterwards, though very uneasy about the chicken. It did not look like any chicken I had ever seen before, with its legs and wings sprawling about as though it were trying to swim. Other chickens are all screwed up together; but Rhoda said it was all right.

Granny went to sleep, I think, for she did not open her eyes when I went up to look at her.

I thought that the broth ought to be done by this time, and I very much wanted to have it ready before the doctor came again, so I went to see Rhoda about it. Somehow, I had quite begun to dislike Rhoda; I used to think her such a nice girl.

"Rhoda! Do you think that broth is done?" I said.

"I don't know, Miss. The Missis does the cooking here; I never do any."

"Well, Rhoda, I will take some up to Granny. Will you put some in a little basin, or a big cup for me?"

Rhoda did it, but did not look pleased. I tasted the broth, and it tasted of nothing at

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)