

DAISY'S FIRST LESSON FROM LIFE.

A parlör rather small, filled with upholstered furniture, an entire set, and a large piano, leaving two paths, by one of which the piano is reached, by another the door. In one corner a large picture of the portly gentleman of the house, in black and white, on an easel. On the piano another, full-length, representing him in overcoat and tile hat. A prominent photographer in town had asked if he might take this latter one in order to exhibit it, and, upon permission granted, had presented one to him. One or two more of smaller proportions were standing on the piano or the center table.

A large base burner gave out its warmth very agreeably to Mr. Gray, as he entered and called out to his wife:

"Say, Sis; won't you bring me the lap robe? I have forgotten it."

Mrs. Gray ran and brought it out, laughing. She considered nothing a trouble that contributed in the slightest way to Randolph's comfort. Had she not toiled hard one winter to make money enough to buy him that handsome gold watch that he wore? Had she not worked hard, too, to get herself a silk dress, in order that Randolph might not be ashamed of her now that he was teller of the bank?

"I have always heard," she used to say to her friends, "that banking was so easy. It is not easy for Randolph. He never gets home until eleven or twelve o'clock. I know what it is to be a banker's wife, for Daisy and I sit up for him every night. The boys make so many mistakes, and Randolph has to go all over their work and correct it before he can do his own." Then her friends would look surprised, glance at one another and say: "They supposed bankers were out at three."

"No, indeed—nearer three in the morning, than three in the afternoon," she would reply.

In this same parlör, a few days later, a little girl was sitting, perched on the piano

stool, her feet dangling, striking the keys daintily, one at a time. She seldom struck two at once. They made a sound she did not like; sometimes, however, she struck two that made a sound she liked better than that of the one key. Then she would strike it many times. She would sing now and then snatches of songs in a clear, childish voice—a strange medley of Sunday school hymns and popular songs of the day.

Finally she stopped, jumped down, and began to talk.

"How do you do, Mrs. Jones?" she said, as if addressing some one occupying one of the large easy chairs. "How do you think my little girl plays?" Then, changing her voice to represent the other person—"I think she does very well, Mrs. Gray. Does she practice much?" "Well, I have to scold her a good deal. She is quite a hard child to manage." she added, bursting into a wild little laugh at herself. At this point she spied her father coming and ran to meet him. "Papa, Manda told me to tell you I was your little cherub." But her father did not seem to hear her.

All evening Daisy romped with Sancho, until the clock struck eleven. Then Mrs. Gray spent the remaining hour in calming her down and putting her to sleep. One o'clock, two o'clock, before Mr. Gray came. He was late that night.

"What is the matter, Randolph? You look like a ghost," said his wife, as he entered.

"It is all up with me, Sis. We must give up Prince and the piano and that lot of ours. They say I have taken money from the bank."

"Taken money—you—of all things! Randolph Gray! It's those boys' mistake. I will wake you up early, so that you can go right down and tell them."

"Don't talk so much, Sis," was all her husband deigned to reply.

Now, a house on the corner, in a part of the town beginning to give way to business blocks. A sign of boarding on the side.