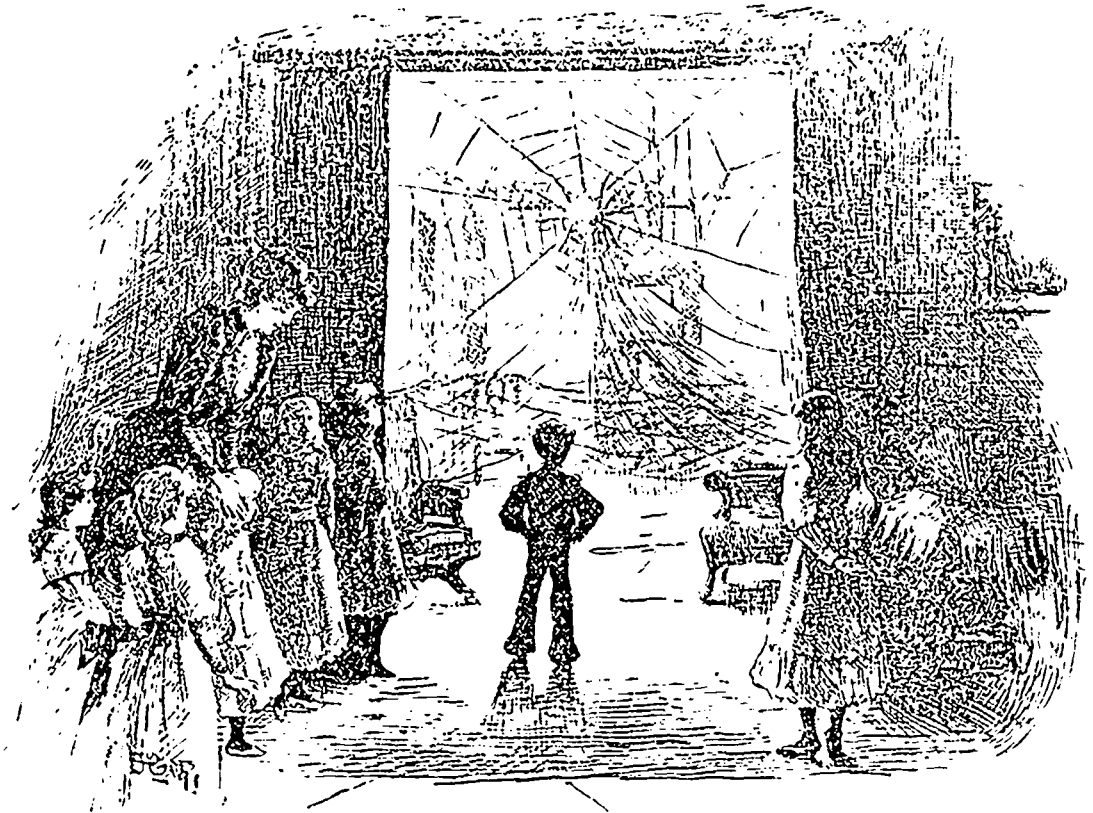




"THEY SAW A GREAT WEB HANGING FROM THE UPPER PART OF THE DOORWAY."

leads you, winding it as you go ; so, forward and back again, in and out ; I will help the littler ones, and we shall see who comes to the end of the cobwebs first, without breaking a single thread."

She started them off, and soon the girls went merrily hither and thither, and from room to room, wherever their cobweb thread happened to lead them, and their laughter and joyous voices as they followed the slender clues, proved that aunt Margaret's device had been a happy one.

Aunt Margaret herself was fully occupied at first in directing four-year-old May's footsteps, and in trying to prevent mischievous Willie from hopelessly tangling his own and all of the others' threads, but baby May soon claimed her undivided attention, laughing delightedly all the while at being allowed to join in the "bid dirls' dame."

Suddenly aunt Margaret heard one of the girls cry out, "Oh, Alice Fane, that isn't fair, you cheated !"

"I didn't cheat, I can't help it if the cobweb breaks !"

"But I saw you break it, and you know that isn't fair——"

"Well, I don't care," said Alice, tossing her

curls. "Willie has gone and snarled the threads so they can't be straightened any other way."

Aunt Margaret saw a flash of the "Preston temper" in Rose's eyes, and scorn of the trick and the untruth, then, as her eyes and aunt Margaret's met, the color overspread her face and she said, quickly, "Give me the broken threads, I will help Willie straighten them out, and Alice can take mine."

Aunt Margaret smiled her approval and gave Rose's hand a little loving squeeze as she passed by, guiding little May, and so the momentary trouble was adjusted without her having spoken a word.

The webs were all unwoven at last, and as the children, with cheeks flushed a little with excitement, paused, aunt Margaret touched the bell, and the maid came in, carrying a tray filled with inviting-looking packages, tied up in dainty wrappings.

"This is Rose's birthday," aunt Margaret said, "and in honor of the day she has a little gift for every one of you. Come Rose," she said to the wondering girl, "read off the names now, and distribute the remembrances among your friends."

There were books for the older girls, and