

'LIZBETH OF THE DALE

CHAPTER I

THE GAY GORDONS

ON the side porch of the gray stone house sat Miss Gordon, steadily darning at the eight pairs of stockings belonging to her eight nephews and nieces. The strenuous task of being foster-mother to the eight had long ago taught Miss Gordon the necessity of doing two things at once. At the present moment she was attending to three beside the darning, and had chosen her position with an eye to their accomplishment. Here, where the Virginia creepers shaded her from the afternoon sun, she was near enough to the wall enclosing the backyard to mark that the Saturday raking and tidying of that battleground of the young Gordons suffered no serious interruption. Also, she could watch that little Jamie, tumbling about the grass in front of her, did not stray away to the pond. And, best of all, she commanded a view of the lane leading up to the highway, for a girl in a blue cotton gown and a big white hat was moving up the path to the gate between the willows, and Miss Gordon had