

## Marjory Davis

By Dora Harrison

**M**ARJORY DAVIS sat on the door-step of her mother's house with a very discontented frown upon her face. "It is always like this, can't, can't, can't; I am sick and tired of hearing the word can't, and I did want my new dress so badly and my shoes and my ribbons."

It might be supposed from the above that Marjory Davis was a much abused child, whose training consisted entirely of the negative element and that somewhere in the background was a person, in the form of a mother, who, to say the least, was entirely out of harmony with her child's mind.

But, instead of that, the true statement of the case was quite the opposite. Marjory's mother was a widow, kind and affectionate, who would willingly have given to her little daughter everything that her heart would wish or that money could buy, provided, of course, that she had the money for such indulgences, and, also, provided that such indulgences would not tend to spoil the character of her little girl.

Though Marjory's mother was a widow she was not considered poor, and up to the present had been able to gratify her own needs as well as those of her child with almost everything that they thought necessary. But lately, owing to the increased cost of living, and the changed conditions generally, a number of things had to be withheld, things

"Good-morning, dear," she said, and as she spoke Marjory sat up and looked at her.

"Good-morning," she repeated, and her face looked so bright and happy that Marjory, in spite of her troubles, smiled back at her.

"Your garden," she continued, "looked so bright and pretty that I could not help coming in to look at it. I have not seen so many flowers before—no, not in months."

Her garden? Marjory turned her head and sure enough, there she was right in the centre of a beautiful garden, beds of flowers, rose-covered arbors and sparkling fountains. It was so beautiful that Marjory could only sit and look at it, and the longer she looked the more beautiful it became, and the more it seemed to belong to her, so that when the old woman said, "I was so tired when I came in here, but your flowers have made me feel better already and I think if I had a cool drink from from one of those fountains I would be strong for all the rest of the day," Marjory became fully conscious of the fact that the garden was all hers and that the strange little old woman was tired and thirsty and was asking for a drink of nice cold water from one of the fountains not far distant.

Being naturally polite and respectful, Marjory felt it would be a pity not to give it to her, seeing, the giving would



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that Marjory had begun to look upon as necessities and was very loathe to look upon in any other way.

"The other girls have them, mother, and why can't I?" she would reason, and her mother would explain, that, as now a dollar bought so many less things than it did two years ago, and as they had no more dollars to spend than before, it was necessary to do with less if they were going to come out even at the end of the year.

Nevertheless, Mrs. Davis, with increasing sorrow could not but realize how hard it was for Marjory to see beyond her own little wants, and how unwilling, also, was she inclined to see any other side but that of herself as an injured martyr.

Marjory's brow was still puckered and her step defiant as she got up from the door-step and threw herself down on the green grass under the shade of an old apple tree.

"It is too mean for anything," she said, "that I will have to wear my old dress and old slippers or else stay at home from the party when all the other girls will have everything new. I will stay at home, I won't go and be a laughing stock and when mother sees how unhappy I am she will be sorry that she has been so stingy," she didn't complete the word for a strange little old woman wearing a green dress and a straw hat came walking down the path and stopped right in front of where Marjory lay.

be such a little trouble, so she skipped gayly along the path in front of the little old woman, and there at the first fountain was a silver cup hanging by a chain. She filled the cup to the brim and handed it to the little old woman who drank from it eagerly.

"There," she said when she had finished, "thank you, dearie, I will be strong for all the rest of the day."

"Have you far to go?" asked Marjory, "and would you like some of my roses?" and without waiting for an answer she began to pick the beautiful roses that hung in clusters near.

"Oh, I thought you would find me," laughed a little voice, out from under the rose Marjory had just picked, "and me too," gurgled another, and to Marjory's surprise and joy, out from under the rose-bushes trooped a whole company of little boys and girls laughing and dancing and singing.

The old woman was laughing, too, and as Marjory handed her the roses she said, "Now have a good play, dear, it will do me good to sit and watch you". So Marjory and the children laughed and sang and played and romped, and when they became tired there appeared, as if by magic, a table covered with everything the children counted good to eat.

There was more laughing and talking and eating, until Marjory thought she had never had such a good time before and was wishing that it might last for ever, when, suddenly glancing up she

saw someone she had not seen before.

A little girl with a pale face and a torn dress. Her hair was not combed and there were scratches on her hands and feet and, altogether she looked very unhappy and very untidy, but as soon as she saw the little old woman she ran and buried her face in her lap and began to cry.

The children, when they saw what had happened, all stopped laughing and talking and looked very sober.

The old woman gently patted the little head with her hand and at each pat

the hair seemed to straighten out, and, then, when she had rubbed her hand several times down the length of the hair, nice shiny curls lay there, curls, Marjory thought that looked something like her own after her own dear mother had brushed them round her finger in the mornings before she started out for school.

The children had now crowded around and some were rubbing the poor bare bleeding feet and others were kissing the scratched hands and soon the little girl looked up and smiled, then she look-

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