

LETTERS TO PATTY

climbing rose there—little white, frail, flat flowers it had, with pinky centres. It was always blighted; but I don't think roses ever smell so sweetly to me now as those did.

Your rose was by the tool-house, the stream and the pale blue door that led into the field. It was dark, dark red, almost black. You took to disappearing every morning, Patty, after breakfast. One day I followed you. There you were, standing on tip-toe in a passion of adoration before your red rose, your slim, sunburnt little fingers beneath the dusky petals, your great mane of straight hair hanging past your sash. Slowly and reverently you bent your head; you kissed the fresh dark petals, then drank the dew from the heart.

"It makes me feel good, Babs," you explained awkwardly.

You must have been a nice child, Patty.

Yet everyone but Mother thought you sulky and unattractive. Funny, thin, little dark girl who so often had sick headaches, and who needed much sleep—which, through me, you did not get! They said you were ill-tempered, and not "thoughtful," yet, when Clémentine was down at supper, and all the grown-ups were far away in the drawing-room, and the nursery curtains