

LETTERS TO PATTY

rows of boots, enormous sponges, and countless walking sticks. A much admired but awe-inspiring person this, who waxed enthusiastic over our childish drawings, yet never played hide and seek with us as other children's fathers seemed to do.

Whom do you remember best, Patty, Miss Hurdle, with the heavy, round, black ruler for you, and kisses and presents for me, or George, our little fair-haired brother, with whom you and I were always squabbling? He was neither flesh, fowl, nor good red herring, was he? For half his time was spent in the nursery, the other half doing lessons at the Vicarage.

Then there were two big brothers, one at Winchester, one at Wellington, and the rather alarming Big Sister. Big Sister used to appear suddenly in the most disconcerting fashion from France, Italy or Wales, sometimes bringing with her, it is true, delightful little wooden spoons, or tiny earthenware pots with handles, in which we put the milk for our dormice, or bran for our guinea-pigs; but also sinister plans for lying on the floor to straighten round shoulders, theories of porridge for breakfast and earlier bedtime, readings from books two little girls could not understand. Like a periodic comet she would soon vanish into space again, a space which al-