

My individual pursuits, and my own little stock of interests, were of course of no account. I was required to be in a perfectly free, disengaged state of mind, and ready to drop every thing at a moment's warning from any of my half dozen seniors. "Here Hal, run down cellar and get me a dozen apples," my brother would say, just as I had half built a block house. Harry, run up stairs and get the book I left on the bed—Harry, run out to the barn and get the rake I left there—Here, Harry, carry this up garret—Harry, run out to the tool shop and get that—were sounds constantly occurring—breaking up my private cherished little enterprises of building cob-houses, making mill dams and bridges, or loading carriages, or driving horses. Where is the mature Christian who could bear with patience the interruptions and crosses in his daily schemes, that beset a boy?

Then there were for me dire mortifications and bitter disappointments. If any company came and the family board was filled and the cake and preserves brought out, and gay conversation made my heart bound with special longings to be in at the fun, I heard them say, "No need to set a plate for Harry—he can just as well wait till after." I can recollect many a serious deprivation of mature life, that did not bring such bitterness of soul as that sentence of exclusion. Then when my sister's admirer, Sam Richards, was expected, and the best parlor fire lighted, and the hearth swept, how I longed to sit up and hear his funny stories, how I hid in dark corners, and lay off in shadowy places, hoping to avoid the activity of the domestic police. But no, "Mamma, mustn't Harry go to bed?" was the busy outcry of my sisters, desirous to have the deck cleared for action, and superfluous members finally disposed of.

Take it for all in all—I felt myself, though not wanting in the supply of any physical necessity, to be somehow, as I said, a very lonesome little fellow in the world. In all that busy, lively, gay, bustling household I had no mate.

"I think we must send Harry to school," said my mother, gently, to my father, when I had vented this complaint in her maternal bosom. "Poor little fellow, he is an odd one!—there isn't exactly any one in the house for him to mate with!"

So to school I was sent, with a clean checked apron, drawn up tight in my neck, and a dinner basket, and a brown towel on which I was to be instructed in the wholesome practice of sewing. I went, trembling and blushing, with many an apprehension of the big boys who had promised to thrash me when I came; but the very first day I was made blessed in the vision of my little child-wife, Susie Morril.

Such a pretty, neat little figure as she was! I saw her first stand in the school-room door. Her cheeks and neck were like wax; her eyes clear blue; and when she smiled two little dimples flitted in and out of her cheeks, like those in a sunny brook. She was dressed in a pink gingham frock, with a clean white apron fitted trimly about her little round neck. She was her mother's only child, and always daintily dressed.

"Oh, Susie dear," said my mother, who had me by the hand, "I've brought a little boy here to school, and will be a mate for you."