

'There, there, lovey!' the old man whispered comfortably; 'we'll be all alone on the stage, and we'll talk things over 's we go along the road, an' mebbe they won't look so bad.'

Every mile of the way was as familiar to Rebecca as to Uncle Jerry; every watering-trough, grindstone, red barn, weather-vane, duck-pond, and sandy brook. And all the time she was looking backward to the day, seemingly so long ago, when she sat on the box-seat for the first time, her legs dangling in the air, too short to reach the footboard. She could smell the big bouquet of lilacs, see the pink-flounced parasol, feel the stiffness of the arched buff calico and the hated prick of the black and yellow porcupine quills.

The drive was taken almost in silence, but it was a sweet, comforting silence to both Uncle Jerry and the girl.

Then came the sight of Abijah Flagg shelling beans in the barn, and then the Perkins' attic windows with a white cloth fluttering from them. She could spell Emma Jane's loving thought and welcome in that little waving flag—a word and a message sent to her just at the first moment when Riverboro chimneys rose into view—something to warm her heart till they could meet.

The brick house came next, looking just as of