

ANNA OF THE FIVE TOWNS

CHAPTER I

THE KINDLING OF LOVE

THE yard was all silent and empty under the burning afternoon heat, which had made its asphalt springy like turf, when suddenly the children threw themselves out of the great doors at either end of the Sunday-school—boys from the right, girls from the left—in two howling, impetuous streams, that widened, eddied, intermingled and formed backwaters until the whole quadrangle was full of clamour and movement. Many of the scholars carried prize-books bound in vivid tints, and proudly exhibited these volumes to their companions and to the teachers, who, tall, languid, and condescending, soon began to appear amid the restless throng. Near the left-hand door a little girl of twelve years, dressed in a cream coloured frock, with a wide and heavy