

LETTERS TO PATTY.

II.

YES, if it had not been for your wholesome discipline, Patty, I should have become unbearable. I thank you now, after twenty-two years, for measures which seemed a little harsh at the time—such as that of the mouse. There was a flower pot with a dead musk outside on the nursery window. In it we buried that mouse you had found in the lane, thinking to get his skeleton, just as they did in the adventure books we loved. A perfect skeleton for your museum! What happiness! But we forgot there was no tropical ants' nest in the flower-pot, and when we dug up the mouse a week later, our noses told us we were premature. He was hastily bundled back and patted over before Clémentine returned with the hot water to wash for luncheon. That afternoon I was sent out to play in the garden as usual, leaving you in the sunless dining-room, struggling with long division, smudging the white figures on your slate with tears. A heavy, round, black ruler was laid suggestively near your little