

than they owned to themselves, that they had not been met at the station. At last they found the house. Timidly Draxy lifted the great brass knocker. It looked to her like splendour, and made her afraid. It fell more heavily than she supposed it would, and the clang sounded to her over-wrought nerves as if it filled the whole street. No one came. They looked at the windows. The curtains were all down. There were no signs of life about the place. Tears came into Jane's eyes. She was worn out with the fatigue of the journey.

"Oh dear, oh dear," she said, "I wish we hadn't come."

"Pshaw, mother," said Reuben, with a voice cheerier than his heart, "very likely they never got our last letter, and don't know we were to be here to-day," and he knocked again.

Instantly a window opened in the opposite house, and a jolly voice said, "My gracious!" and in the twinkling of an eye the jolly owner of the jolly voice had opened her front door and run bareheaded across the street, and was shaking hands with Reuben and Jane and Draxy, all three at once, and talking so fast that they could hardly understand her.

"My gracious! my gracious! Won't Mrs. Melville be beat! Of course, you're her folks she was expecting from the West, ain't you? I mistrusted it, somehow, as soon as I heard the big knock. Now I'll just let you in the back door. Oh my, Mis' Melville 'll never get over this; to think of her be'n' away, an' she's been lookin' an' lookin', and worryin' for two weeks, because she didn't hear from you; and only last night Captain Melville he said 'he'd write to-day if they didn't hear.'"

"We wrote," said Draxy, in her sweet, low voice, "we wrote to Aunt Emma that we'd come to-day."

"Now did you!" said the jolly voice. "Well, that's jest the way. You see your letter's gone somewhere else, and now Mis' Melville she's gone to"—the rest of the sentence was lost, for the breathless little woman was running around the house to the back door.

"Well, well, you're just all tired out with your journey, an' a cup o' tea's the thing you want, an' none o' my talk; but you see Mis' Melville 'n me's so intimate that I feel's if I'd known you always, 'n I'm real glad to see you here, real glad; 'n I'll bring the tea right over; the kettle was a boilin' when I run out, 'n I'll send Jim right down town for Captain Melville; he's sure to be to the library. Oh, but won't Mis' Melville be beat."

Reuben and Jane and Draxy sat down with as bewildered a feeling as if they had been transported to another world. Presently they observed the bare, wooden floors, the flag-bottomed