

"I—I simply couldn't, at least while it was daylight so I waited until now. Are you glad, Nan?"

"So glad, dear heart," answered Nan, "so glad, your sake and for his."

"He—he said you would be glad, Nan."

"And he is right, Mollie," said the other girl, kissing tenderly the dark, wistful face.

"And Nan, I'm to come back soon and we're going to live right here in Talbotville; there, now," said Mollie, patting her friend's cheek, lovingly. "Does that take any of the blues away, dear?" she asked. "And, oh, Nan, won't it be nice for us to be so near one another all the time?"

"So nice," answered Nan.

"I might as well tell you everything, Nan," said Mollie, slowly. "It's a secret though, so remember you must not tell anybody."

Nan laughed.

"I'll not tell a soul," she replied.

"Well, then, this is the secret. Little Dorothy, brother's daughter, is going to Buffalo to be educated. Now she has the sight that big, long-haired worshipper of hers, Uncle Bill, declared she shall have the best education the money can secure. And he is going with her, my dear. He and Auntie Dustband and Bruno and the canary and—"

Mollie stopped, completely out of breath.

"Go on, dear—and the cat. Surely auntie will tell Tab?"

"No. Tab's mine. Auntie gave her to me. She says it will mean good luck, the dear, generous soul."

"And I know all the rest—at least, I can guess the rest without you saying another word, Mollie. For—"