

sat in the cheerful firelight, the nights being still cold enough to enjoy a cosy chat in its warmth and cheerfulness, "in a week or so I will have a birthday. I will be sixteen."

"A happy time of your life, Erica, 'where the brook and river meet.' I really think some of its sweet, tender grace envelops you now as a garment."

"That must be an 'outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace.' However, it is going to envelop me in the pleasures of a fete in its honor, and Aunt Marian sends you an invitation to help eat the birthday cake. And do you know, Marjorie, I have a feeling in the air that papa may come to add to the pleasure of the occasion."

"And I have an Apollo-like feeling that your predictions will not receive credence. But there is a pleasure in bright anticipations.

"'Tis better to have hoped and lost
Than never to have hoped at all."

"You see, Marjorie, by the tone of his last letter I think he is pining for New York, as if any place could be lovelier than Fern Villa,