

Thirteen at Last.

NORA FERRY.

This is my birthday to-day, you know:
The days are so long, and the time goes so
slow,

When one is waiting as I have been
A whole long year to bring thirteen.

But here I am in my teens at last;
I feel quite old as I think of the past.
As I look way down the years and see
The little girl that once was me!

But thirteen is quite old, I'm sure,
What some people might call "mature";
Why, all my skirts have been let down,
And I'm to have with my next new gown

A jacket-waist just like mamma's,
Trimmed with buttons and braided bars,
And I've got some splendid grown-up gloves,
With long slim wrists, that fit like loves.

Yes, thirteen is quite old—and so—
I suppose I must let my dollies go.
There's Maud and Alice, and that sweet
dear

With flaxen curls, I had last year.

It seems a shame to put them away,
But one must give up childish play
When one is almost a woman grown;
And yet—and yet—my heart's like a stone.

And I feel like having a real good cry,
When I think of bidding my dolls good-bye.
Oh dear, oh dear, I've always been told
Life grows so hard as one grows old!

Well, nothing, I'm sure, can be harder than
this—

To give my children a farewell kiss.
Yes! they are my children, and Jack may
laugh,

And all the rest may tease and chaff,

I can't, I can't, and I won't turn away
My Maud and Alice and flaxen May!
I'd rather go back and be once more
The romping girl I was before!

I'd rather have all the tucks put back
In my lengthened gowns, and the childish
sacque

In place of the waist, just like mamma's
With pretty buttons and braided bars:

I'd rather—yes, even my grown-up gloves,
With the long slim wrists, that fit like loves,
I'd rather give up than turn away
From my dear old dolls... this late day.

For love is better than all the rest,
And one must be true to have the best;
So Jack may tease, and the other's chaff,
I'll take my way in spite of their laugh.

But oh! it isn't so nice, I see,
To grow up big, as I thought 't would be,
And it's very true, what I've been told,
That life grows hard as one grows old.

—*Ymas Wide Awake.*

AUNT DINAH'S SEARCH.

An Incident of the Charleston Earthquake.

BY SARAH LEE.

"Oh, oh, oh!" gasped little Mabel Emory, as she opened her eyes, and found her rosewood half-canopy bed bounding across the room. "What's the matter?" And she began to cry.

"It's the end of th' worl', honey. The good Lord's done come for th' judgment day," said Aunt Dinah, the old black mammy; and hastily catching the child up, she wrapped her in a shawl, and rushed out into the hall.

There they found the family gathered in terror, Mr. Emory supporting his invalid wife, while the solid walls of the house rocked from side to side.

"Papa take Mabel—Mabel's so 'fraid," said the child, holding out her arms to her father.

"Papa has mamma, darling. Won't you let mammy take care of you?"

"Yes, I will," said she, clasping her arms around the black neck; "but kiss Mabel once."

"God grant we may come safely out of this!" said the father, as he kissed the dear little upturned face.

"Dod'll take care of us, papa; you tote me so your own self."

"Bress de chile!" said Aunt Dinah, holding her close as they groped their way through the darkness.

It was the never-to-be-forgotten night of August 31, in Charleston, the beautiful city by the sea. The confusion in the street was terrible; the shrieks of the horror-stricken people, the rumble of the upheaving earth, the thud of falling buildings, made a din that cannot be described.

"To the park, to the park!" cried a loud voice; and thither the terrified people fled.

"Aunt Dinah, come and help me a moment," said Mr. Emory, as his fainting wife slipped from his grasp.

Aunt Dinah hastily set Mabel on the ground, while she sprinkled her mistress's face from a bottle of cologne which she had in her pocket.

"Now," said Mr. Emory, "follow me, as closely as you can, to the park." And with a hasty glance behind he hurried on.

Aunt Dinah turned for her charge, but, to her dismay, no Mabel was to be seen. She rushed from one side to the other, calling, "Mabel, my law'! honey, chile! whar is yer? Come back to you ole black mammy."

But the dull crash of the falling buildings was her only answer; and the people around, thinking she was affrighted at the scene, and not understanding her words, bade her be quiet.

Suddenly a thought struck her. Might not the child have become confused, and wandered back into the house they had just left? She hurried to the entrance, and was about darting in when a man caught her arm. "Don't you see, aunty, the house is just going to fall!"

"My chile, my chile! I'se 'feared she's in thar, marster," she said, wringing her hands, and trying to break away from him.

"No," he said, kindly, "thero's no one in there; I've just been through."

"Move back, move back!" cried the crowd.

And with a roar and a groan the wall fell outward. A great piece of plaster came down on Aunt Dinah's head. Her bandanna turban kept it from doing fatal harm, but it stunned the old woman, and turned her sick and giddy, and that, with the fright, dazed her completely. She lost her wits, and wandered aimlessly about the streets calling:

"My lam', my little white dove! whar is yer? Come back to yer ole black mammy."

Hundreds of people heard the plaintive cry and shuddered, clasping their own darlings closer as the mournful wail sounded near and then receded in the distance.

At last her wandering steps brought her to the park, where Mr. Emory was devoured with anxiety for his child; yet he dared not leave his wife alone. But at the first sound of the familiar voice he started up from the iron settee and rushed towards her crying, "Where is Mabel, Aunt Dinah?" Then as he caught sight of the distraught face, and saw that her arms, although pressed close to her breast, were empty, he seized her by the shoulder, and cried, "What's the matter? Wher's my baby? What have you done with her?"

"O marster! she's gone," sobbed the poor creature. "My chile, my little lam'! whar is yer? Come to yer ole mammy."

That was all he could gather from her. "She has lost her mind, and no wonder," he groaned. "But where is my baby, lost in this terrible city?"

"Henry," said his wife, in an agony of tears, "leave me, and go and look for her."

"Will you stay, Aunt Dinah, and take care of Miss Emily while I go and search for Mabel?" said he.

"I los' her, marster, I'll fine her;" and she broke away and wandered on.

"Shall we ever find her?" cried the poor mother.

"God grant it!" was the answer; "but we must wait for the morning." And Mabel! where was she?

When the old woman sat the child on the ground to attend to her fainting mistress, a second tremble of the ground, faint compared to the first but plainly to be felt, swept over the earth, causing an accession of terror and a fresh rush of the multitude out to the parks and down to the Battery.

The frightened little one, left alone for the first time in her life, shrank back with terror at the confusion, and in a second the crowd surged around her, and she was carried off in their midst; and when Aunt Dinah looked for her charge she was half-way down the block, a helpless atom in that cruel, crushing crowd.

But if her cries fell unheeded upon the ears about her, there was One who heard and noted the pitiful wail from those baby lips.

"Mabel's so tired! Mabel wants papa. Wher's my mammy?"

It almost seemed as if an invisible shield surrounded the little one, for, except for her terror, she was untouched by harm, and when, at the crossing of the Boulevard, the crowd parted to the right and left, she was left alone on the curb. Tired though the little feet were, there seemed no place for them to rest: the shrieks, the crashes, the glare terrified her more, and she wandered on. But the One who had kept her unhurt in the terrible crush of the crowd, guided her footsteps now, and on down to the

Battery, where the cool breezes of the sea blew in to moderate the heat of the city, she went.

The silken shawl had long fallen off, and the tiny figure, clad in her little white embroidered night-gown, with yellow curls streaming down her shoulders and pattering bare feet, seemed strangely unsuited to that gloomy midnight hour in the terror-stricken city.

"Oh, look! Diok, hero's an angel coming," said a rough stevedore standing on the wharf, as the blue-eyed baby came on towards him. She looked into the kindly face, and, holding out her arms, said:

"Take Mabel. Mabel's so tired."

Tenderly, as her own father could have done, he lifted her in his arms; and, with a little sigh she nestled her head on his shoulder, and closed her eyes.

"Hero, Bill," said the other, his voice choked and his eyes shining, "we can make her bed on this lumber."

With their flannel shirts they made a couch, and there the little one slept. Who can doubt that he had given his angels charge over her?

As the first beam of the morning sun shone on the water, Aunt Dinah wandered down to the Battery, still crying: "My lammie, my little lammie! whar is yer?"

That dear voice, which was the first sound that Mabel had ever learned to know, penetrated the child's sleep, and, opening her eyes wide, she called: "Here's Mabel, mammy; here's Mabel."

Quick as a flash the old woman swooped down upon her nursing, clasping her in her arms as if to make amends for having ever let her go, and sobbing and crying, "Bress de Lord, bress de Lord."

"Good-by, men," said Mabel, putting up her little mouth to kiss them as she was borne away in Aunt Dinah's arms. "I tanks 'oo fur takin' care o' Mabel!"

"Here she is, marster. Didn't I tell yer ole Dinah los' her, ole Dinah'd fine her!" said the delighted nurse as she put the child into the father's arms.

Mr. Emory held his darling closely, and covered her with kisses, while she whispered, "God did take care o' me, —didn't he, papa?"

"I thank him, I thank him!" was all the father could say. What to him were the losses of houses and money when his dearest treasures were safe?

COLLECTING DIAMONDS.

In one province of China, having great mineral wealth, the natives are said to have the following method of collecting small diamonds: The jewel-seeker puts on his feet a pair of thick straw shoes, and walks about in the sand and shallow streams. The diamonds, for the most part, are no larger than a pin's head, but ragged in outline, pierce the straw, and there remain. The shoes are collected at the day's end, and burned; after which search is made amongst the ashes for diamonds.