



tardiness of the exchange of letters between England and Australia made waiting an absolute necessity, the days now seemed to fly by on golden instead of leaden wings, whilst the new brightness of the spring and summer all helped to give tone to the invalid and to restore him to health. A sailing-vessel was no longer talked of for the voyage. Dax was in far too great a hurry to get to his new duties to tolerate such an idea, and he was making such satisfactory progress now that Giles declared he would be almost well before he started, and that a few weeks in the steamer would be all that was necessary to restore him completely.

As for Nancy, when the first astonishment and dismay had passed, the idea of going to Australia with Dax upon a long visit exercised a complete fascination over her, and her chief fear was lest it should be selfish of her to go away and leave the cares of housekeeping that she had found so onerous and burdensome to Damaris.

Good Nancy had always been the home daughter—the one bird who had never left the nest on any pretext whatsoever. As the eldest daughter and for many years the most useful one, she had grown into the way of being the mother's right hand, taking her place as far as possible when she had been laid aside by illness and family cares, and